

BEYOND MOSQUE, CHURCH, AND STATE



ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES OF THE NATION IN THE BALKANS

Edited by THEODORA DRAGOSTINOVA
and YANA HASHAMOVA

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Nation in the Balkans*



Edited by
THEODORA DRAGOSTINOVA
and
YANA HASHAMOVA



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Fax: +1-646-557-2416
E-mail: meszarosa@press.ceu.edu

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Preface and Acknowledgements

The idea for this volume emerged from a conference held at The Ohio State University, “Beyond Mosque, Church, and State: Negotiating Religious and Ethno-National Identities in the Balkans,” 6–8 October 2011. The goal of the conference was to engage the issue of linguistic, religious, and ethno-national diversity in the Balkans from a variety of perspectives while questioning assumptions of Balkan exceptionalism by challenging well-entrenched stereotypes about the area both in academia and in the general public space. The conference was generously funded through a Collaborative Research Grant from the Division of Arts & Humanities and a Faculty Grant from the Mershon Center for International Security Studies, Ohio State University. The organizers also wish to express their gratitude to the Slavic and East European Center, the Department for Slavic Languages and Cultures Paisii Fund, and the Department of History.

Considering the findings of the conference and further research, we narrowed down the topic of the volume to alternative notions of the nation in the Balkans, showcasing the existence of non-national and anti-national alternatives to state-centered ideas of the territorial nation in a variety of case studies. While focusing on areas that are usually considered “hotbeds” of national unrest due to their religious and ethno-national diversity, such as Bosnia, Macedonia, Albania, and Bulgaria, the contributors challenge the readers to engage in a new way of thinking about the region and Balkan studies in general. The volume

includes contributions from leading and junior scholars on the Balkans and presents a truly interdisciplinary perspective from the fields of history, cultural linguistics, musicology, film studies, and political science. Its goal is twofold: to showcase cutting-edge research on the Balkans in a variety of disciplines and to provide a textbook for upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses on the Balkans, nationalism, state-building, and identity in a comparative European perspective. The volume will also appeal to governmental agencies that continue to monitor, study, and fund research on the area and to the general educated reader interested in the Balkans.

We wish to thank our contributors for their painstaking work in a challenging project that sought to integrate different disciplines and their respective (often conflicting) research questions and methodologies. The reader will discover that the transliteration styles of the chapters differ, but we wanted to preserve the interdisciplinary nature of the scholarly dialogue both in content and form. The comments of the reviewers of Central European University Press kept us on our toes as we were making the final changes in anticipation of an open-minded, engaged, and interdisciplinary audience. Many thanks to Jordan Peters for help with the conference, to Catalina Hunt for editing and formatting some of the early chapter drafts, and to Justin Wilmes for preparing the final version of the volume for submission.

All web links were accessed and active in May 2015, unless noted otherwise.

INTRODUCTION

Beyond Mosque, Church, and State: Alternative Narratives of the Nation in the Balkans

Theodora Dragostinova and Yana Hashamova

Traveling in Ottoman Macedonia in the early 1900s, the British journalist Henry Brailsford famously described his encounter with the complex national identities of the population in this part of the Balkans. As he explains, “it is not uncommon to find fathers who are themselves officially ‘Greeks,’ equally proud of bringing into the world ‘Greek,’ ‘Servian [sic],’ Bulgarian’ and ‘Roumanian’ children.... I was talking to a wealthy peasant.... He spoke Greek well but hardly like a native. ‘Is your village Greek,’ I asked him, ‘or Bulgarian?’ ‘Well,’ he replied, ‘it is Bulgarian now but four years ago it was Greek.’ The answer seemed to him entirely natural and commonplace.”¹ The British traveler Harry de Windt, writing about “the wild and lawless countries between the Adriatic and Black Seas” in 1907, bewilderedly described the city of Sarajevo in then Austrian Bosnia as “swarmed with strange nationalities, Bosnians, Croatians, Servians, Dalmatians, Greeks, and Turks”; despite his mixed feelings about the “lazy indifference” of the Bosnian capital, he could not hide his admiration that “the Spaniards [i.e., Sephardic Jews] live in perfect peace and harmony with the Christian and Mussulman [sic] population.”² To further complicate the picture of ethnic heterogeneity of the area, in 1914, soon after the end of the Balkan Wars, the Bulgarian ethnographer Stoiu Shishkov described the constant “merging and disappearance” of populations in the “ethnic conglomerate” of the Balkans. A Bulgarian national activist, he lamented how the new borders shaped the

identities of the population that he considered to be Bulgarian: “The situation ... is unique and regretful. Grecisized [*pogârcheni*] Bulgarians to the south, Romanianized [*poromâncheni*] to the north, Serbianized [*posârbeni*] to the west, and Turkified [*poturcheni*] in all directions that include the ethnographic realms of the Bulgarian nation.”³ These descriptions, originating from both outside observers and local political figures, demonstrate the ethno-national and religious diversity of the area in the beginning of the twentieth century and convey the impression that the national allegiances of the populations in the Balkans were always in flux.

This attention given to the changing ethno-national and religious composition of the Balkans and the shifting identities of its population can be seen throughout the twentieth century. Bosnian Muslims uneasily juggled their complex identities, navigating between state ascriptions and their own conflicting loyalties based on their religious and ethnic affiliations. One Bosnian Muslim describes his experience in the Yugoslav army in the 1950s: “I wanted to be *Bosanac*. They [the Yugoslav officials] said, you can’t be *Bosanac*, you can be either Serb or Croat, and I didn’t want to be [in the] undecided [category]. Out of spite, I said I would be a Montenegrin.... Afterwards, I kept thinking: what are we, what are we?”⁴ This ambiguity of where one stands is also prevalent among the Bulgarian Turks, reflecting their conflicting experiences in Bulgaria that culminated with the “great excursion” of 350,000 people to Turkey in 1989. When talking about his life in pre-1989 Bulgaria, a Bulgarian Turkish immigrant now in Turkey recounted: “When I came to Turkey, I became enlightened, as if I entered heaven. In Bulgaria I felt dark. Not because of the people. I had Bulgarian friends—teachers, superintendents. But because of those in power. They were despotic against [the Bulgarians] too.”⁵ But the new immigrants shared uneasiness about their experience in Turkey: “We were Turks in Bulgaria but we are *giauri* [lower classes] here.”⁶ Or, in the opinion of a young Bulgarian Turkish woman, “We came to Turkey but we did not become Turks.”⁷

Despite the pronounced experiences of some with their fluid national identity, the expression of distinct (yet constructed) ethnic and religious identities permeates the life of ordinary people in the Balkans today. Adela Peeva’s documentary *Whose Is That Song?* marvelously illustrates the sentiments of national identities in vehement opposition

to the neighbor's history and traditions. Peeva, a Bulgarian documentarian, travels through the region (Turkey, Greece, Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia, Serbia, and Bulgaria) and asks local people whether they can recognize a song and tell her about its origin. Familiar with the song from her childhood, Peeva discovers with bewilderment that everywhere in the Balkans the same song is recognized as local (national). More intriguingly, the neighbor is fervidly denied any possibility of having or knowing the same song, as on some occasions Peeva's local hosts become aggressive and threaten her if she continues to claim that the song is also performed in other Balkan countries. The film exemplifies the stubborn inability of people in the Balkans to recognize and share their common history and culture.

The cultural expression of differences, but this time coexisting peacefully, is also evident in two monuments built on a peak in the Rhodope Mountains in Bulgaria. The 1,993-meter-high peak, known with three different names, Svoboda (Freedom), Momchil (a legendary Bulgarian freedom-fighter) and Enikhan Baba Teke (Enikhan's Shrine), became a space for the demonstration of religious and cultural differences of Bulgarian Turks, on the one hand, and nationalist Bulgarians, on the other. Based on a legend about the burial of an Ottoman military leader who conquered the Rhodope Mountains in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and with the financial support of local Muslim communities and the political party Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS in Bulgarian) with a mostly Muslim electorate, between 2004 and 2005 a mausoleum was constructed with a glass sarcophagus inside to commemorate Enikhan Baba, who exists in the Bulgarian Turkish imagination as a cultural and religious hero. Interestingly, 600 steps lead to it, the same number as the steps taking Bulgarians to the monument Shipka erected on another mountain range to celebrate Bulgaria's liberation from the Ottoman Empire in 1878. Shortly after Enikhan Baba's mausoleum appeared, the Bulgarian nationalist party Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO in Bulgarian) placed next to it a granite tombstone dedicated to Momchil, the Bulgarian defender of the Rhodope Mountains. After some tension and media debate, now the two monuments exist next to each other with no signs of vandalism and destruction. In addition, an online discussion group of Bulgarian-speaking Muslims (pomak.net) includes numerous posts, in Bulgarian and Turkish, on the topic of the



Plate 0.1. Yeni Khan Baba Teke Tomb in the Village of Davidkovo*

two monuments. Different opinions are voiced, but the tone is civil and the exchange of thoughts is stimulating and encouraging. Although the Enikhan Baba/Momchil peak and its space clearly testify to the spirit of religious and cultural differences, they also suggest the possibility for tolerance and diversity (see Plate 0.1).

Scholars have acknowledged the possibilities for peaceful coexistence of diverse and often conflicting cultural and religious communities in the Balkans. Robert Donia has been a vocal proponent of the argument of pluralism in Bosnia.⁸ Most recently, his *Sarajevo: A Biography* has powerfully depicted the rich tradition of ethnic and religious cohabitation in the city that the bloody conflict of the 1990s shattered. A firm defender of the notion of multiculturalism as the “existence of distinct cultural, ethnic, and religious communities that do not necessarily overlap and comeingle,” Donia offers an alternative interpretation of the population dynamics in this most diversely populated Balkan capital,

* For this and other photos of historical and current sites in Bulgaria, see http://gallery.guide-bulgaria.com/a/15467/davidkovo_yeni_khan_baba_teke.

relentlessly undermining myths of long-term ethnic conflict: "Common life presupposes that people ... are unlikely to assimilate into an undifferentiated, homogenous whole. Sarajevans have long used the concept of neighborliness to express their respect of those of different faiths and nationalities, manifest in the practices of mutual visitations and well-wishing on holidays as well as everyday cordial relations. Common life is neighborliness writ large."⁹ Analogous examples of coexistence are evident in other contexts as well. In her work about the Bulgarian Muslim minorities, *The Orient Within*, Mary Neuburger claims that modernity and Bulgarians' desire for Europeanization, that is, inclusion in Western (European) civilization, have deepened the conflict between the Bulgarian majority and Muslim minority in the larger perception of binary cultures—West (Bulgarian) vs. East (Turkish). She acknowledges that despite the wedge that modernity drove between Bulgarians and Turks, the Bulgarian national project has undergone complex alterations.¹⁰ Neuburger notes, "contrary to my initial assumption that projects of modernity had only served to divide Bulgarian from Muslim after centuries of coexistence, I have concluded that these projects served alternately to divide and to integrate.... In spite of ethnic tensions, Bulgaria has a functioning democracy with active Muslim political participation."¹¹ Similarly exploring cases of non-aggression, the anthropologist Gerald Creed examines the unique Bulgarian winter ritual of mumming (*kukeri*), a cultural phenomenon that suggests acceptance of opposite and binary forces as a core of existence. Basing his argument on the participation of Roma in local mumming rituals, Creed claims, "The documentation of an alternative view of community in rural Bulgaria brings me to the contentious claims with which I began. The possibility that rural Bulgarians have a notion of community that is based on conflict may account for the lack of extreme xenophobic and virulent nationalism in this multiethnic country."¹² This type of local cultural manifestation (and consequently the perception of community that such manifestations create) open space for imagining a society in which conflicts are symbolically enacted and accepted.

These nuanced views are in sharp contrast to more orthodox perceptions of nationalism in the Balkans as an inherently violent aberration that supposedly dictates the lives and choices of people in the area.¹³ While allusions to ancient hatreds are out of fashion and the perception of the Balkans as a naturally troublesome area is waning,

ethnic diversity and national tensions in the Balkans continue to attract the attention of the international community of scholars and policy makers who try to understand how states, societies, and people in the area negotiate complex religious and ethno-national identities.¹⁴ The multiple and turbulent political transitions in the area, the dynamics of the interaction between Christianity and Islam, the contradictory and constantly shifting nationality policies, the tensions between diverse populations as well as their fluctuating identities continue to be seen as major challenges to the stability of the region.

By exploring the development of intricate religious, linguistic, and national dynamics in a variety of case studies throughout the Balkans, this volume traces the complicated process of negotiating official national discourses and practices while it also demonstrates the existence of alternatives and challenges to nationalism in the area. The authors analyze a variety of national, non-national, and anti-national(ist) encounters in four areas, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Albania, traditionally seen as “hotbeds” of nationalist agitation and tension resulting from their populations’ religious or ethno-national diversity. Without attempting to be comprehensive, the main objective of this volume is to highlight the emergence of new voices in the literature that contribute to the relatively recent understanding of the region as one allowing alternative narratives to the nation.¹⁵ Recent scholarship, while still evolving and struggling to gain legitimacy, has revisited the assumptions of deeply ingrained nationalism and provided convincing evidence undermining their validity. In their entirety, the contributions in this volume chart a more complex picture of the national dynamics—a presentation that recognizes the existence of national tensions both in historical perspective and in contemporary times, but also, and more importantly, recovers the existence of anti-national and non-national alternatives to straightforward ideas of nationhood. The authors contribute to the enhancement of Balkan studies in the direction of questioning the monolithic national (and often violent) approach to the region by exploring case studies that poke holes in the predominant understanding of the Balkans as a conflict-ridden area. Thus, they add to the growing voices of scholars recognizing exceptions to the old dominant paradigm of Balkan studies.

Journalists and policy makers in the West have often assumed that the religious and ethno-national heterogeneity of the Balkans is

the underlying reason for the numerous problems the area has faced throughout the twentieth century. Indicatively, the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s are now routinely referred to in the West as the “Balkan Wars” although they bear little resemblance to the wars of the 1910s and, characteristically, did not include all Balkan states but were limited to the Yugoslav lands. With the splintering of Yugoslavia into independent, nation-based (albeit not homogeneous) states, a consensus seemed to be emerging that nationalism inevitably triumphed and non-national ideology was a failure in the entire area, an argument that was then transferred back to historical situations to question the vitality of anti-national developments in the past, in addition to the present. However, what was remarkable in the Balkans after 1989 was the fact that some countries and societies (outside of Yugoslavia), despite their religious and national heterogeneity, did *not* undergo brutal war and ethnic cleansing, but, on the contrary, retained relative, albeit fragile, political stability and ethnic equilibrium. Despite the fact that nationalism is assumed to have prevailed in the area, plenty of examples suggest the existence of different paths to the nation that did not involve violence, but allowed for complex processes of national accommodation and reconciliation. Thus, instead of focusing solely on the reasons for war and ethnic cleansing, it is also important to examine, in an interdisciplinary context, how political institutions, decision-making processes, social networks, personal experiences, cultural products, and identity politics allow the creation of alternative narratives of the nation and the preservation of ethnic stability—even if tenuous—in the face of interstate controversies and intercommunal tensions between national and religious groups.

The Balkans present numerous fascinating case studies of ethnic diversity, national conflict, and religious strife, but dynamics vary so broadly according to the specific regional situation and time period that it is difficult to discern a specific “Balkan way” of dealing with heterogeneity. Generally, the countries and nations in the area experienced a number of strained transitions from empires to nation-states in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to communist internationalism after World War II and back to nationalism from the 1970s on, but there were a number of regional variations in these developments. After the fall of communism in 1989, the different players followed diverging paths as well. Most strikingly, while Yugoslavia underwent a violent

process of civil war accompanied with ethnic cleansing, especially in Bosnia and Kosovo, Bulgaria retained relative ethnic peace, religious tolerance, and political stability. Macedonia experienced a similar historical development from an Ottoman borderland to a Yugoslav republic to a conflict-ridden independent state, but did not undergo a full-blown war on a Bosnian scale. Albania, which faced territorial aspirations from all of its neighbors in the first half of the twentieth century, followed a remarkably isolationist policy under communism that presented unique challenges in the process of transition to democracy and market economy. By highlighting these various experiences, the ultimate purpose of this volume is to demonstrate that states and societies in the Balkans experience comparable challenges of ethnic complexity, political conflict, and national reconciliation differently.

We do not claim to be presenting a comprehensive view of national dynamics in the region, but rather we attempt to highlight the diverse experiences with state- and nation-building while also adding to the polyphony of alternative voices questioning the straightforward national model. We demonstrate how, while religious and national paradigms were professed to be the dominant *modus vivendi*, there are numerous examples that people in the Balkans have always sought ways to live “beyond mosque, church, and state,” as the title of this volume suggests.

Historical Background and Scholarly Interpretations

The complex demographic structure of the Balkans remains one of the most important legacies of the Ottoman period, which created a religiously determined social structure that ignored ethnic differences and led to intensive intermingling of diverse populations.¹⁶ Due to this religious as well as ethno-linguistic interpenetration in the Ottoman Balkans, the contemporary Balkan states and nations experienced diverging practices of state- and nation-building in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with some countries acquiring state structures relatively early (Greece in 1830) whereas others only emerged on the European map later (Albania in 1913). The success of state-building was not universal either. While only a small Bulgarian principality was established in 1878, it successfully achieved its unification in 1885 and acquired full independence in 1908. In contrast, Bosnia

inconclusively transitioned from an Ottoman province to an Austrian territory from 1878 to 1908, creating political instability and ethno-national turmoil in the area, as manifested in the 1914 assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. When the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia) was created in 1918, it tried to juggle different understandings of nationhood, as expressed by its constituent peoples, but ultimately Serbian visions of centralism prevailed during the interwar period. The population of Bosnia did not acquire the status of a constituent nationality, continuing the undetermined area of the region, claimed by both Serbs and Croats. Kosovo, annexed first to Serbia after the Balkan Wars and then incorporated in Yugoslavia, continued being seen as an integral part of Serbia despite the fact that, demographically, it had shifted to a majority Albanian populated area, and so Serbian policies of colonization and nationalization continued throughout the interwar period. The situation was equally complicated in Ottoman Macedonia, whose territory was claimed by Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The *de facto* partitioning of the territory among the three states after the Balkan Wars and World War I did not assuage tensions, as manifested in the continuous interwar political crises over the Macedonian question in the entire Balkan Peninsula and accompanying attempts at national homogenization in the Macedonian territories that ended up in Serbia and Greece.¹⁷ The Albanian dilemma also remained unsolved as the newly set borders in Kosovo and Epirus divided ethnically related populations on both sides of the Albanian–Yugoslav and Albanian–Greek borders.¹⁸

Bulgaria, Bosnia, Macedonia, and Albania followed different yet interrelated models of nation-building with different degrees of “ethnic unmixing,” as mass emigration occurred among their diverse populations once the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires ceased to exist and nationally defined states emerged in their place following World War I. The post–World War I period saw the triumph of what Eric Weitz has called “population politics” or the handling of discreet groups according to their ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality.¹⁹ In the interwar period all Balkan states, whether Yugoslavia that subsumed Macedonians under Serbs or Bulgaria that wished to differentiate between its Turkish- and Bulgarian-speaking Muslims, implemented policies of nationalization whose goal was to transform their

inhabitants into loyal citizens of states defined as the homelands of the dominant national group. The methods employed by state bureaucracies varied: they intermittently used assimilation, expulsion, and marginalization to homogenize their societies, but borderlands such as Kosovo, Bosnia, and Macedonia remained problematic sites of national indoctrination.²⁰ As it becomes continuously evident in the newest scholarship, people on the ground, whether in Macedonia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, or Albania, had their own expectations from the national bureaucracy and negotiated their roles in society with officials, seeking peace and stability in the aftermath of war.²¹

The relentless policies of centralization and nationalization, combined with the ambiguity of people's identities, created numerous crises in the 1930s and 1940s. Interwar Yugoslavia continuously struggled to gain legitimacy in the eyes of its population that shared common origin but had different traditions, languages, and religions; the tensions between Serbian centralism and Croat federalism was one of the reasons that exploded the first Yugoslavia. Even after international recognition in 1921, Albania had to tackle problems associated with tribal divisions (Tosks in the South and Gegs in the North) and religious heterogeneity (Muslims, Catholics, and Orthodox). Continued Italian aspirations in the Adriatic would result in the occupation of Albania in 1939, followed by the German dismemberment of Yugoslavia and Greece in 1941. Bulgaria, pursuing revisionism on the side of the Axis, temporarily achieved the "national liberation" of Macedonia and Thrace, at the expense of Serbia and Greece, and unleashed hastily conceived policies to quickly homogenize its "new lands." Therefore, World War II inaugurated a new period of border shifts and population movements in the entire area—as well as a new shift in the identities of people trying to adapt to conflict.²² In Bosnia, for example, the Muslim community experienced a notable shift from religious to civic identification, which continued during the postwar period.²³

Yet, the conflict also created new opportunities as, during and after World War II, Josip Broz Tito was committed to overcoming national differences. The recognition of a Macedonian nation in Tito's vision of a resurrected Yugoslavia brought some stability to that area whose population was now not simply assumed to be Serbs. In the second Yugoslavia, another process of national amalgamation developed as Tito ignored or suppressed ethnic and religious differences in

an effort to create a powerful Yugoslav state built on a strong supra-national identity. The socialist regime thus imposed a new view, “the brotherhood and unity of the peoples of Yugoslavia.”²⁴ In the 1960s, the leadership adopted an even more acute policy and proclaimed “the right of every people and nationality in Yugoslavia to free development and their own cultural identity.”²⁵ The process culminated in the Yugoslav census of 1971, which included the category “Muslims in the sense of nationality,” therefore recognizing Bosnian Muslims as a separate nation, rather than a confessional community.²⁶ Yet, the 1970s in Yugoslavia also saw deepening divisions as Ljubljana, Zagreb, and Pristina would increasingly demand Slovene, Croat, and Albanian cultural and linguistic rights, in addition to economic and political decentralization. These developments intensified suspicion across the border in Albania where isolationism and anti-Yugoslavism had already merged in the previous decades. Yet, even after Tito’s death in 1980 most Yugoslavs shared a vision of living together in a reformed polity, as evident, for example, in the enthusiastic celebration of the Yugoslav tradition during the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo.²⁷

The Bulgarian national project underwent similarly complex alterations after World War II that uneasily included the Muslim population in the Bulgarian nation. That was particularly true for the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims, or Pomaks, who, based on the prevalent linguistic definition of nationality, were assumed to be part of the Bulgarian nation, despite their Muslim traditions. Under state socialism, the Turks and Pomaks were initially treated as equals with the Bulgarians in their struggle to modernize their country on a Soviet model, leading to a period of socialist internationalism in the early 1950s. But the period after 1956 saw the adoption of a Bulgarian version of “national communism” and led to the intermittent oppression and expulsion of Bulgarian Turks. At the same time, the communist regime did not relent in its efforts to assimilate the Pomaks into the Bulgarian nation as authentic yet “Islamicized” Bulgarians. These tensions culminated in the “revival process” of the 1980s, when Turks were forced to accept Bulgarian names and punished for their refusal to do so, a process that led to the forced migration of 350,000 people to Turkey in 1989.²⁸

In Yugoslavia, from the mid-1980s on, the tension between the Slovene and Croatian visions of independence, on the one hand, and

the Serbian insistence on the preservation of the Yugoslav federation, on the other, became increasingly irreconcilable when combined with the momentum of the end of the Cold War. Following the conflict in Croatia in 1991–1992, the Bosnian War of 1992–1995 was the bloodiest confrontation in postwar Europe that led to 97,100 civilian casualties and two million refugees.²⁹ During the conflict in Kosovo in 1998–1999, up to 900,000 Kosovars fled to neighboring Albania and Macedonia in a matter of weeks, only to return after the end of conflict.³⁰ While many explanations of the Yugoslav Wars have been advanced, one way to interpret the disintegration of Yugoslavia is to examine it as a continuation of the process of ethnic unmixing outlined earlier; the violent end of Yugoslavia was the last of the European conflicts associated with the creation of homogeneous nation-states, and this political breakup was then accompanied by a complex process of identity reformulation in the independent states.

John Lampe insightfully describes the post-1989 period in the Balkans as “Southeast Europe’s third reconstruction in less than a century,” and this observation is particularly true for the former Yugoslav area where communist collapse went hand-in-hand with national independence wars.³¹ In line with this interpretation, recent studies on Yugoslavia’s disintegration have increasingly paid more attention to the dynamics of national identity formations in the newly independent states.³² In Bosnia, studies from the 1990s focused on the nature of military conflict and the mechanisms of ethnic cleansing in the area. Yet, more recent works have tackled the partial “reversal” of these wartime policies and the patchy attempts at the remaking of post-Dayton Bosnia, through the facilitation of refugee return, into a multiethnic entity yet again.³³ While the making of a democratic, inclusive Bosnia is an ongoing process, it has become apparent that there are multiple, complex aspects of change that demand not only the reconstitution of political institutions but also the active inclusion of ordinary citizens in the rebuilding of their lives.³⁴ Although the Dayton Accords of 1995 are widely recognized as effective in ending the violence, the new state structure, which divided the country into two entities (Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the Federation into multiple cantons, proves thorny for the steady political and economic development of the new country because it reinforced ethno-national divisions. Recent parliamentary elections in 2010

showed that ethnic and religious tensions and divisions are still prevalent in independent Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Uncertainty is also widespread in other areas of the post-Yugoslav space. The Republic of Macedonia declared independence in 1991 and managed to avoid the escalation of the tensions between Macedonians and Albanians into an outright conflict, but the controversy with neighboring Greece over the name of the country and the legacy of Alexander the Great hindered international recognition and turned the country into a regional pariah.³⁵ Disputes between Albanians and Macedonians erupt in periodic tensions while the curtailed NATO and EU integration process has propelled to power nationalists who continue to marginalize the country through extreme nationalist propaganda campaigns. By contrast Kosovo, following the renewed Serbian human rights violations from the mid-1990s and decisive NATO intervention in 1999, received massive international financial assistance and political support to implement reconstruction and reform. But even after independence in 2008, unresolved issues with the Serbs remaining in isolated enclaves persist and challenge the domestic and international visions for a stable Kosovo. Serbia itself underwent a protracted process of political crises after its NATO bombing in 1999, many of them associated with the issue of cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia, and Serbs are still struggling to deal with the realization of wartime guilt and the reality of regional marginalization.³⁶

While much of the post-Yugoslav space was in turmoil throughout the 1990s and 2000s, in Bulgaria politicians and national agents proudly proclaimed the uniqueness of the Bulgarian “ethnic model” that avoided bloodshed despite Bulgarian ethnic and religious heterogeneity. But the continued emigration of the Bulgarian Turks after 1989 was not only rooted in the economic difficulties during postsocialism but also resulted from the feeling of marginality that many Bulgarian Turks experienced within Bulgaria. Despite that, since the late 1990s, there has been a large return migration wave of the Turks, triggering additional anxieties within Bulgaria as to the motivation of the returnees.³⁷ Further, the differences between the Turks and the Bulgarian-speaking Pomaks have grown larger, with some Pomak communities accepting an orthodox form of Islam, a trend that distinguished them from the more secular Turks and reignited debates over their

place within the Bulgarian nation.³⁸ In this context, and similarly to other European countries, Bulgaria also saw the emergence of extreme nationalist, far-right parties, raising fears of Euroskepticism, racism, and anti-democratic tendencies.³⁹

The process of political transition continues to be contested in the Balkans. In what is now called the “Western Balkans,” or the non-European Union states of the former Yugoslavia plus Albania, numerous international NGOs have been engaged in the process of rebuilding institutions and political practices of multiculturalism. In Bosnia, facilitating the return of the more than two million refugees and internally displaced persons during the war has emerged as a priority that still causes tensions on the ground.⁴⁰ At the local level, the population in Bosnia and Kosovo has been trying to cope with the legacy of war and ethnic cleansing by first accepting what had happened and then remembering it in meaningful ways.⁴¹ In Bulgaria, the lack of an effective governance or continuity of political elites has led to a confused process of transition marred by accusations of corruption, organized crime, and judicial inefficiency.⁴² Macedonia and Serbia continue to aspire to NATO membership and EU accession, despite vocal opposition of domestic and international voices. Generally, the process of European integration has played a crucial role in steering the transition in the entire area of the Balkans; the heavy involvement of international organizations systematically pushed human rights questions ranging from minority policies and the treatment of Roma to international trafficking and children’s rights. Speaking about the Balkans as a whole, through the European integration talks and the international involvement in the rebuilding of the region after the Yugoslav Wars, local and intergovernmental cooperation on economic and security issues has been advancing while European pressures have constrained attempts of local political actors to sabotage reforms.⁴³ Even in a symbolic sense, after the Bulgarian inclusion in the European Union in 2007 and the Croatian incorporation in 2013, the Balkans have now firmly become Southeast Europe.⁴⁴

Culture has emerged as a powerful way of dealing with the uncertainties of the political and economic transition. Cultural practices and products, such as film, music, or language choice, serve as important alternative, non-political strategies of the population for negotiating identities and making sense of the past or present. Cultural activities

and manifestations thus become the space where collective anxieties and trauma find expression for a healthier social development. National agents often use them as materials for manipulation in politics or the media, yet ordinary people also utilize them as tools of agency and spaces for counter-discourses.⁴⁵ Notably, language has emerged as a major point of contestation in the post-Yugoslav space as Serbo-Croatian split into Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin, all used as markers of separate cultural (and national) identities in the newly formed states.⁴⁶ Bulgarian politicians were the first to recognize the independence of the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia in 1992, but they continue to treat the Macedonian language as a Bulgarian dialect, while debates over the use of history cause recurrent tensions between the two neighbors.⁴⁷ Even Croatian integration in the EU could not prevent discord over bilingual street signs using the Cyrillic alphabet in traditionally Serbian areas.

Despite these attempts to employ culture and history for political reasons, local cultural practices facilitate the process of political transition in the experience of ordinary people as they provide alternative communal resources for navigating the confusion of abrupt change.⁴⁸ Yet, only recently have scholars started analyzing how the cultural products reflect identity negotiations, social tensions, and, perhaps, even growing tolerance toward minorities.⁴⁹ These analyses, emphasizing the human stories behind the conflicts in the Balkans, provide powerful counter-narratives to the dominant discourses of victimhood and violence.

Cultural studies has also promoted a discussion of human rights issues, from refugee repatriation to the return of property to wartime sexual violence, which continue to be painful and controversial topics in the region. Although this volume centers mostly on war rapes and the struggle of survivors to normalize their lives, human rights issues in the Balkans vary from the equality rights of minorities, such as Romani and other ethnic and religious groups, to human and organ trafficking problems that appear to flourish in the region. Some estimates of rapes during the Bosnian war suggest the figure of 20,000.⁵⁰ These crimes have been examined from various perspectives: from analyzing the traumatic consequences for individuals, families, and society to probing the international legal system that defines crimes against humanity. Recent studies have also shown how remembrance, through the creation and

discussion of art works, is essential for communities recovering from problematic past experiences.⁵¹ Such studies ultimately demonstrate that a public forum or a symbolic space for reflection and debate of the traumatic past is paramount for restoring a sense of social community. Therefore, cultural representations in fiction, film, music or dance become not simply the medium of the dominant national discourses, but also function as “weapons of the weak” (as proposed by James Scott) by empowering people to relay their experience and express their opinions of traumatic change.

Volume Argument and Structure

Bringing together historical and contemporary studies of state- and nation-building focused on various areas in the Balkans, this volume highlights the complex inner workings of multiethnic and multireligious states and societies that underwent continuous negotiations between elites and ordinary people about the meaning and purpose of the national message. National practices, be it in Bulgaria, Bosnia, Albania, or Macedonia, were not clear-cut political decisions but often involved numerous adjustments as the process of national consolidation went on. Official interpretations of history evolved over time to match the objectives of the particular state or nationalist elites. People’s identities did not remain static either, but fluctuated in accordance with the specific situation that they faced. Cultural expression often became the realm of national indifference and anti-national contestation. The importance of local matters, rather than national policies, similarly served to undermine the coherent national message. Even when nationalism became the dominant discourse, it sometimes functioned as a rhetorical strategy that pursued other practical goals.

To explore these various aspects of ethno-national conflicts and their alternatives, the volume incorporates historical and contemporary perspectives on state- and nation-building in a unique comparative and interdisciplinary way. First, we present *historical interpretations* of ethno-religious complexity and national conflict in the context of empire- and state-building that demonstrate the uneasy interplay between national and non-national messages during the transition to nationhood in the Balkans. Second, we turn to *contemporary debates*, be it in politics or

cultural expression, that demonstrate the various uses of the national idiom in national elections and local municipal matters, but also in linguistic controversies, dance performances, and film. This interdisciplinary approach aims to demonstrate that a comprehensive understanding of the numerous aspects of nation- and community-building can only be achieved through the integration of various disciplines and their diverse methodologies. Historians have traditionally dealt with the question of nation- and state-building in the area from numerous perspectives while political scientists frequently incorporated the conflict in Yugoslavia into their interpretative frameworks, whether through the collection of quantitative data or through qualitative ethnographic analyses. Yet, if we are to recover the diversity of experiences, national and non-national, in the Balkans, we also need to examine the insights of cultural studies, be it musicology, film studies, and cultural linguistics, who supplement structural analysis by presenting an incredibly rich picture of individual and group experiences on the ground. Therefore, by bringing together a multidisciplinary team of scholars implementing various approaches and methodologies, from archival work to ethnography, from quantitative data analysis to discursive interpretation of cultural products, the volume only underscores the diversity of human experiences when dealing with national ideology and practice.

The first part of the volume focuses on historical interpretations of the Ottoman legacy of ethno-national and religious heterogeneity in the Balkans, explaining the origins of the demographic diversity of the area and its implications for current debates on national and religious tensions in the Balkans. Nikolay Antov analyzes the major patterns of formation of Muslim communities in the Ottoman Balkans from the time of the Ottoman conquest in the second half of the fourteenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries. His chapter discusses the main factors of the ethno-national and religious transformation, such as the influx of Muslim settlers from outside of the Balkans, conversion of indigenous Balkan populations to Islam, and population movements within the Balkans. By exploring the evolution of historiographical interpretations of these religious and demographic transformations, his chapter also illuminates the political nature of the question of Ottoman legacy in the area. National historiographies, be it in Bulgaria, Bosnia, Greece, or Albania, often presented divergent interpretations of the Ottoman past, which reflected their current national priorities. Yet, Antov brings all of these interpreta-

tions together to highlight the complex historical reality and the tenuous contemporary consensus in matters of demographic diversity.

To emphasize the importance of the Ottoman past for contemporary perceptions of and policies in the Balkans, İpek K. Yosmaoğlu challenges the elite-centered explanation of how the Balkans transitioned from empire to nation-states. Instead, she shows how local politics informed the larger political struggle for legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire. Focusing on Ottoman Macedonia, she offers a novel interpretation of national ideology and practice in the Balkans during the last years of Ottoman rule. Her chapter argues that nationalism, a modern political ideology embraced by the Balkan bourgeoisie in its secular form, had to be recast in a new, religious language that was more accessible to the non-national peasants in order to find the mass support it needed to prevail as *the principle* of political legitimacy. She also explains how political violence became the ultimate catalyst in this process that welded free-floating allegiances into hard and immutable boundaries. Thus, she introduces a new paradigm of analysis that demonstrates how it was not nationalism that led to conflict in the diversely populated Macedonian lands, but in fact elite-generated violence triggered nationalism as conflict forced people to ambivalently take sides.

The next cluster of chapters then zooms in and focuses on specific ideas of nationhood and dilemmas of nation-building in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, paying attention to both the discourses generated by elites and the practices of individuals. Focusing on the establishment and growth of newspapers and printing presses in Ottoman and Habsburg Bosnia between 1850 and 1910, Edin Hajdarpasic complicates our view of the connection between the growth of literacy and the popular press, on the one hand, and the rise of nationalism, on the other. In the interpretation of Hajdarpasic, the new popular press was not simply a tool for national mobilization because it was the Ottoman and Habsburg imperial governments that established the first printing presses in Bosnia and policed political expressions over the course of the nineteenth century. His chapter explores how both Ottoman and Habsburg administrations in Bosnia hoped to harness the new media as imperial vehicles of political reform and social change, while this opening of the public sphere also created new spaces for the Serbian and Croatian nationalist challenges to the legitimacy of imperial rule. Therefore, Hajdarpasic puts the portrayal of non-national and

anti-national alternatives at the center of his analysis. Theodora Dragostinova similarly presents a dynamic view of the Bulgarian nation by exploring how, since 1878, Bulgarian national activists have used different ways of classifying their diverse ethnic and religious populations into discreet “groups” by using language, religion, or nationality as criteria. Analyzing the language of censuses, ethnographic works, and policy documents, she shows that demographers, ethnographers, and state officials constantly adjusted their categories to chart a more numerous Bulgarian nation by excluding some groups while folding others into an all-encompassing Bulgarian nationality. Her chapter focuses on the problematic groups, from the viewpoint of the national activists, within Bulgaria, such as the Turks, Pomaks, Greeks, and others, but also explores Bulgarian attitudes to the diverse populations in the “unredeemed lands” of Ottoman Macedonia. The chapter complicates the official views of the Bulgarian nation as stable and enduring and demonstrates the constant negotiations over the issue of who constitutes a good Bulgarian.

The next two chapters showcase the role of intellectuals in framing official and popular views on the nation by analyzing the relationship between communism and nationalism in Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Brenna Miller shows the importance of secular Bosnian Muslim intellectuals for promoting the official recognition of a Bosnian Muslim nation in Tito’s Yugoslavia. The chapter explores official attempts of federal and republic leaders to deal with the distinctiveness of the Bosnian Muslims from 1944 to 1974 and their changing definitions of the population. If after World War II the Muslims were seen in ethnic but not national terms, gradually their religious belonging was accepted as the most important marker of the community, thanks to the activities of secular Bosnian Muslim intellectuals in positions of power. With the republic Constitution of 1968 and the census of 1971, the Bosnian Muslims were officially recognized as one of the constituent nations of Yugoslavia, a development codified in the federal Constitution of 1974. Therefore, the chapter shows the uneasy process of “secularizing” a nation that was originally deemed to have specificity exactly due to its religious peculiarity, a process that highlights the various ways of “making nations” in the Balkans. Shifting to Bulgaria, Irina Gigova explores the role of writers, the par excellence public intellectuals with strong connections to the population as

a whole, for promoting a particular view of Bulgarian national identity in the post-1956 Zhivkov period. By looking at the texts and the public interactions of novelists, poets, and playwrights, she explores what national(ist) messages targeted socialist Bulgarian citizens in the long Zhivkov era. Ultimately, her chapter demonstrates the complex individual and group negotiations of the meaning of national pride in the context of Moscow-oriented, socialist Bulgaria. Gigova surprisingly argues that, while the communist regime expected the loyalty of intellectuals in crucial issues such as the “revival process” of the Bulgarian Turks, the writers often subverted the goals of the regime by failing to offer sound support of assimilationist anti-Turkish policies. In the end, non-national(ist) affiliations prevailed even among those who had traditionally been considered the main allies of nationalist regimes.

From this rich historical background that presents fluctuating ideas of the nation the volume transitions to contemporary issues of ethno-national and religious diversity, as evident in current political and cultural discourses and practices. In fact, separating politics and culture proves impossible as cultural products emerge as arenas of political contestation while political choices reflect local cultural conventions, norms, or traditions. By providing examples from Bulgaria, Bosnia, Macedonia, and Albania, Victor A. Friedman uses the lens of language to chart different scenarios in which distinct groups may fail or succeed to create a sense of language-based unity for themselves and speakers of closely related dialects. The chapter analyzes the success of Albanian national activists to create an Albanian nation based on language, contrasting it to the inability of the linguistic forms used in Bosnia to do the same for the South Slavs, despite the greater linguistic commonalities in the South Slav dialects. Taking the viewpoint of a linguist with both academic (ivory tower) and practitioner (on the ground) experience, Friedman further engages in a comparative examination of the vitality of nineteenth-century nationalism in the twenty-first-century Balkans by providing examples of linguistic battles elsewhere in the Balkans today. In the end, he demonstrates the continued salience of the national message in the area, but also its numerous meanings and uses according to specific contexts. Continuing this comparative perspective, Yana Hashamova analyzes Muslim women’s experience as portrayed in contemporary Bulgarian and Bosnian films that tackle the topic of ethno-national conflict. Her chapter situates this analysis in the context

of Bulgarian Muslim and Bosnian women's subjugation to state regulations and religious norms as well as their physical victimization in the recent ethnic and religious clashes in Bulgaria in the 1980s and Bosnia in the 1990s. However, while recognizing the importance of institutional dictates and prevalent moral codes, Hashamova also highlights women's agency and their ability to transcend ethno-national and religious constructs through their own personal choices. She contends that certain cultural products resist the official, often repressive discourse, and function as counter-discourses. This focus on personal agency is at the forefront of cultural studies, which emphasizes the importance of individual choices in broader social debates, as also evident in the work of Donna A. Buchanan. By using the medium of music, her chapter shows divergent perspectives on the nation currently at play within Bulgarian artistic communities by examining three current musical and dramatic productions of Bulgarian expressive culture. By analyzing these different approaches to the nation, she shows how cultural producers are redefining the very essence of "national" folklore in direct defiance of a lingering socialist-era cultural policy legacy. Therefore, Buchanan convincingly shows that individual author or performer interpretations undermine the possibility for the creation of a straightforward, coherent national message. Finally, her chapter also reminds the readers that post-socialist market tensions, touristic expectations, and collapsing governmental support played an important role in the changing and conflicting representations of the Bulgarian nation.

But even contemporary political tensions and controversies are not always perceived or experienced through a national lens. Maria Popova presents a fresh analysis of Bulgaria's far-right party, Ataka, which has been interpreted as a threat to democracy because of its racist, nationalist, anti-capitalist, and anti-European rhetoric. By using quantitative analysis of individual-level data on voting preferences, attitudes, and the socioeconomic background of Ataka sympathizers, her chapter shows that Ataka voters do not support the party because of xenophobia, racism, or even nationalism, but because they are profoundly dissatisfied with the political establishment of post-socialist Bulgaria. In contrast to interpretations that far-right voters reject democratic ideals, her chapter shows that Ataka's sympathizers participate in the democratic process through a national network of grassroots party organizations that provide an alternative view of how their country

should have developed during post-socialism. Thus, her analysis challenges explanations of the growing far-right political following as the result, exclusively, of the presence of nationalist aspirations. Paula M. Pickering similarly challenges interpretations of political life in post-Dayton Bosnia, which after 1995 developed a complex array of rules at the national, entity, and cantonal levels to address ethno-national identities. By focusing on municipal governance, with its capacity to be most effective in delivering basic services to citizens, as the foundation for democratic governance, she argues that political arrangements since 2000 suggest the importance of local concerns, in addition to ethno-national identities, in fragmented Bosnia. To demonstrate this trend, her chapter investigates how internationally supported municipal governance in Bosnia has been capable of elevating local citizens' concerns. In the end, Pickering argues that reforms of local governance have made small steps in progress during times in which ethno-national political divisions have increasingly paralyzed higher levels of governance.

By presenting such varied interpretations of the historical evolution and contemporary meaning of ethno-national and religious diversity in the Balkans, the volume seeks to question the accuracy of stereotypes about the Balkans and highlight the existence of experiences that go "beyond mosque, church, and state." The volume therefore emphasizes the duality and multiplicity of national experiences in the Balkans. While nationalism often prevailed, the creation of national paradigms has always been a conflict-ridden process that involved numerous parties engaged in a complex process, cultural or political, of negotiation of differences. This volume reminds readers of the gaps in the official national discourses in the Balkans and the possibility of non-national visions or anti-national actions that constantly undermined any assumption of clear-cut national(ist) projects.

NOTES

- 1 H. N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future* (New York, 1971), 102.
- 2 Harry de Windt, *Through Savage Europe: Being the Narrative of a Journey throughout the Balkan States and European Turkey* (London, 1907), 15–23.

- 3 Stoiu Shishkov, *Pomatsite v trite bâlgarski oblasti: Trakiia, Makedoniia i Miziia* (Plovdiv: Makedoniia, 1914), 2–3.
- 4 Fedja Burić, “Dwelling on the Ruins of Socialist Yugoslavia: Being Bosnian by Remembering Tito,” in *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, ed. Maria Todorova (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 232.
- 5 Mila Maeva, *Bâlgarskite turtsi preselnitsi v republika Turtsiia* (Sofia: IMIR, 2006), 123.
- 6 Antonina Zhelyazkova, ed., *Between Adaptation and Nostalgia: The Bulgarian Turks in Turkey* (Sofia: IMIR, 1998), 169.
- 7 Maeva, *Bâlgarskite turtsi preselnitsi*, 268.
- 8 For an earlier work attacking notions of Balkan exceptionalism and Bosnian aberrations, see Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine, Jr., *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
- 9 Robert J. Donia, *Sarajevo: A Biography* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 4.
- 10 For an additional study of the Bulgarian Muslim minorities and their participation in the political process, see the work of the social anthropologist Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities of Bulgaria* (New York: Rutledge, 1997). The political, social, and economic developments in the last fifteen years, however, proved some of his views and predictions flawed.
- 11 Mary Neuburger, *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 17.
- 12 Gerald Creed, “Constituted through Conflict: Images of Community (and Nation) in Bulgarian Rural Ritual,” *American Anthropologist* 106.1 (March 2004), 56–70 (67).
- 13 Robert Hayden, for example, argues that the conflicts in Yugoslavia followed constitutional processes which made heterogeneous communities unimaginable. See “Imagined Communities and Real Victims: Self-Determination and Ethnic Cleansing in Yugoslavia,” *American Ethnologist* 23.4 (1996), 783–801.
- 14 The most powerful criticism of these stereotypes remains Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- 15 We do not explore Greece, Romania or Serbia systematically in this volume. Due to its political separation from the rest of the Balkans during the Cold War, developments in Greece have traditionally been treated separately from a larger Balkan paradigm. For a recent study that “returns” Greece to the Balkans, see Vangelis Calotychos, *The Balkan Prospect: Identity, Culture, and Politics in Greece after 1989* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Studies of Romania, by contrast, have been trying to estab-

lish the Central European credentials of the country, and often ignore its Ottoman legacy. One notable exception is Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000). Recent studies of Serbia are also rare, perhaps because the uncertain political situation in the country has inhibited Western researchers. Some recent explorations include Melissa Bokovoy, “Kosovo Maiden(s): Serbian Women Commemorate the Wars of National Liberation,” in *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, ed. Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 157–170; Sunnie Rucker-Chang, “Cultural Formation in Post-Yugoslav Serbia: Divides, Debates, and Dialogues” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2010); and Jessica Greenberg, “On the Road to Normal: Negotiating Agency and State Sovereignty in Postsocialist Serbia,” *American Anthropologist* 113.1 (2011), 88–100. For a recent comparative examination of Serbia and Croatia, see Jelena Subotic, “Stories States Tell: Identity, Narrative, and Human Rights in the Balkans,” *Slavic Review* 72.2 (Summer 2013), 306–326.

- 16 For a discussion of the many legacies of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, see Maria Todorova, “The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans,” *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint in the Balkans and the Middle East*, ed. L. Carl Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 45–77.
- 17 For an overview, see Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia, 1870–1913* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2003). For Serbian Macedonia, see Nada Boskovska, *Das jugoslawische Makedonien 1918–1941. Eine Randregion zwischen Repression und Integration* (Wien/Köln/Weimar, 2009). For Greek Macedonia, most recently see Harris Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-nationals, Refugees, and Minorities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 113–142.
- 18 For an excellent overview of Balkan history in the long twentieth century, see John R. Lampe, *Balkans into Southeastern Europe: A Century of War and Transition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). For the establishment of the nation-states in the Balkans, see *ibid.*, 31–74. Two other useful surveys are R. J. Crampton, *The Balkans since the Second World War* (New York: Longman, 2002); and Dennis Hupchik, *The Balkans: From Constantinople to Communism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
- 19 Rogers Brubaker, “The Aftermath of Empire and the Unmixing of Peoples,” in *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires*, ed. Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 155–180; Eric Weitz, “From Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions,” *American Historical Review* 113 (2008), 1313–1343.

- 20 Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Neuburger, *The Orient Within*; Lampe, *Balkans into Southeast Europe*, 69–74.
- 21 Tone Brंगा, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Kirsten Ghodsee, *Muslim Lives in Eastern Europe: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Transformation of Islam in Post-Socialist Bulgaria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Theodora Dragostinova, *Between Two Motherlands: Nationality and Emigration among the Greeks of Bulgaria, 1900–1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Emily Greble, *Sarajevo, 1941–1945: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Hitler's Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).
- 22 See Lampe, *Balkans into Southeast Europe*.
- 23 Greble, *Sarajevo, 1941–1945*.
- 24 Andrew Wachtel, "Postmodernism as Nightmare: Milorad Pavic's Literary Demolition of Yugoslavia." *Slavic and East European Journal* 41 (1997), 627–644.
- 25 Wachtel, "Postmodernism as Nightmare," 631.
- 26 Francine Friedman, *The Bosnian Muslims: Denial of a Nation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996); Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962–1991* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).
- 27 Donia, *Sarajevo*, 246–249.
- 28 Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities*; Neuburger, *The Orient Within*.
- 29 "Bosnia Dead Figure Announced," *BBC News*, 21 June 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6228152.stm>; Mirsad Tokača, *Bosanske knjige mrtvih: Ljudski gubici u Bosni i Hercegovini 1991–1995* (Sarajevo: Istraživačko Dokumentacioni Centar, 2012).
- 30 Lampe, *Balkans into Southeast Europe*, 266.
- 31 Lampe, *Balkans into Southeast Europe*, 256.
- 32 The nature of the post-socialist transition in the area and the Yugoslav Wars are two enormously complex issues that are beyond the scope of this volume. But the rebirth of nationalism in the area in the 1990s has been tackled by many scholars, including Jill Benderly, *Independent Slovenia: Origins, Movements, Prospects* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); John Cox, *Slovenia: Evolving Loyalties* (New York: Routledge, 2005); William Bartlett, *Croatia: Between Europe and the Balkans* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Alex Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity: A Centuries-Old Dream* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).

- 33 Norman Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of "Ethnic Cleansing"* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995); Dzemal Sokolovic and Florian Bieber, eds., *Reconstructing Multiethnic Societies: The Case of Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001); Florian Bieber, *Post-War Bosnia: Ethnicity, Inequality and Public Sector Governance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Gerard Toal and Carl Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade: Ethnic Cleansing and Its Reversal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- 34 Brad Blitz, *War and Change in the Balkans: Nationalism, Conflict and Cooperation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Paula M. Pickering, *Peacebuilding in the Balkans: The View from the Ground Floor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).
- 35 Loring Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).
- 36 Lampe, *Balkans into Southeast Europe*, 256–296; Dimitar Bechev, *Constructing South East Europe: The Politics of Balkan Regional Cooperation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
- 37 Ayse Parla, "Remembering across the Border: Postsocialist Nostalgia among Turkish Immigrants from Bulgaria," *American Ethnologist* 36.4 (2009), 750–767; Ayse Parla, "Irregular Workers or Ethnic Kin?: Post 1990s Labor Migration from Bulgaria to Turkey," *International Migration* 45.3 (2007), 157–181.
- 38 Ghodsee, *Muslim Lives in Eastern Europe*.
- 39 Sabrina Ramet, *The Radical Right in Central and Eastern Europe since 1989* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).
- 40 Pickering, *Peacebuilding in the Balkans*; Toal and Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade*.
- 41 Selma Leydesdorff, *Surviving the Bosnian Genocide: The Women of Srebrenica Speak*, trans. Kay Richardson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).
- 42 Venelin Ganev, *Praying on the State: The Transformation of Bulgaria after 1989* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).
- 43 Bechev, *Constructing South East Europe*.
- 44 Lampe, *Balkans into Southeast Europe*.
- 45 For more on cultural reflections of national and political processes in the region, one should explore fascinating literary examples such as David Albahari's *Words Are Something Else*, Hristo Boichev's *The Colonel Bird*, Ismail Kadare's *Elegy for Kosovo*, Alexander Hemon's *Nowhere Man* as well as films like Milcho Manchevski's *Before the Rain* (1994), Srdjan Dragojevic's *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* (1996), Danis Tamovic's *No Man's Land* (2001), and Radoslav Spassov's *Stolen Eyes* (2005), among others.

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- 46 Robert Greenberg, *Language and Identity in the Balkans: Serbo-Croatian and Its Disintegration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- 47 Brown, *The Past in Question*.
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Part I:

HISTORICAL DILEMMAS

CHAPTER 1

Emergence and Historical Development of Muslim Communities in the Ottoman Balkans: Historical and Historiographical Remarks

Nikolay Antov

Introduction

The presence of sizable Muslim communities in the Balkans today is indisputably one of the most salient aspects of the Ottoman legacy in the region. And while the period of Ottoman rule in Anatolia, and later in the greater part of the Middle East, may be seen as a continuation and development of already existing political, cultural, and religious traditions in those lands, the centuries of Ottoman dominance in the predominantly Orthodox Christian Balkans have often been viewed as a period of unseen oppression and a major “civilizational change” which ran counter to the region’s traditions and acted as a potent impediment to its “natural” development and overall progress.¹ Hence, it should not be seen as a surprise that Christian majorities in the modern Balkan nation-states that formed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have continuously expressed negative attitudes toward the Muslim communities in their countries, verging from suspicion to open animosity. As also elucidated in the chapters by İpek K. Yosmaoğlu, Theodora Dragostinova, Yana Hashamova, and Victor A. Friedman in the present volume, these Muslim communities continue to be viewed as “foreign bodies” in most Balkan societies, and their formation and existence has been shrouded in a variety of unfounded historical myths that present Muslims in the modern Balkans as the descendants of historical “traitors,” or “victims” of violent campaigns of forced conversion to Islam and ethno-linguistic assimilation directed by the Ottoman state.

This chapter will proceed with a general overview of the most prominent features, arguments, and theories that scholars have developed in the past decades with regard to the formation and historical development of Muslim communities in the Balkans. Following that, an attempt will be made to concisely assess these theories and outline some major patterns of the formation and historical development of Muslim communities in the early modern Ottoman Balkans (late fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries), focusing on the two major processes that historically conditioned the formation and growth of these communities: the conversion to Islam of local population groups in the Balkans and the colonization of the region by Turkish-speaking Muslims (be they nomadic or sedentary) from Anatolia during the period of Ottoman rule. In doing this, I will highlight two major related aspects: (1) regional differentiation, as Muslim communities formed in different parts of the peninsula at different times, whereby one may point to the dominant role that conversion to Islam played in the development of such communities in the western Balkans and, conversely, to the high importance of Turcoman colonization regarding the (initial) development of Muslim communities in the eastern Balkans, and (2) the issue of “indigenization of Islam”—a centuries-long process through which Islam and Islamic culture gradually became a part and parcel of the regional Balkan religio-cultural landscape, a development that certainly had a considerable positive impact on the growth and sociocultural integration of Muslim communities.

The Historiography on the Formation of Muslim Communities in the Ottoman Balkans

The historiography on the formation of Muslim communities in the Ottoman Balkans has, at least until recently, been dominated by the national historiographies of the Ottoman successor-states in the Balkans and the Republic of Turkey. For a variety of reasons, including the scarcity of adequately trained specialists, political tensions during the Cold War and restricted access to archival and manuscript collections, Western scholars have produced relatively little work on the history of the Muslim communities in the region. The predominant part of the works dealing with the history of Muslim communities in the peninsula

produced by Balkan national historiographies has to be placed in the context of the development of politicized, mythical representations of the region's past in relation to the forging of Balkan national identities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, whereby the history of Muslim communities in the Ottoman Balkans has been situated within the general treatment of the Ottoman period and its legacy.

The writing of history in the Balkans (including Turkey) has not just been ideologically driven; national historiographical schools (even when one allows for methodological and conceptual diversity within those) have indeed played a major role in the production of politico-historical myths related to the Ottoman period that became part and parcel of the nationhood mythologies of the respective Balkans nation-states. Mythicized representations in scholarly works have trickled down to dominate primary and secondary school textbooks and inform popular perceptions of Ottoman rule and its historical impact. In the national historiographies in the three largest Balkan countries dominated by Orthodox Christian majorities—Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia—the period of Ottoman rule has been traditionally conceptualized as an era of oppression, humiliation, and resistance, whereby the “glorious” pre-Ottoman statehood and cultural traditions of these respective “nations” were suppressed by the “aggressive” and “culturally inferior” Ottoman polity. The centuries of Ottoman oppression proved a test for the resilience of these “nations,” which reemerged in the age of “national revival” in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thus, while Ottoman rule in the Balkans has usually not been conceptualized as colonial domination in the “modern” (or rather “early modern”) sense in the context of European transoceanic colonization of far-flung areas in Africa, Asia, and the Americas,² these Balkan nationalist narratives of Ottoman rule possess many of the typical features of post-colonial representations of European colonial rule in the various nationalist historiographies in the non-Western world, and render the period of Ottoman domination as the middle element in a tripartite periodization of national history. As Partha Chatterjee has demonstrated, such a periodization usually features a glorious ancient (or “classical”) past, a “dark” middle period of foreign domination, and an era of “national revival” in which the shackles of foreign oppression are broken and the “nation” reemerges drawing on both its ancient glory and historical resilience to foreign oppression.³

Thus, in terms of myth typology, the most important generic myth type in Balkan nationalist historiographies regarding the period of Ottoman rule is that of *martyrium*, which, as Pal Kolsto has argued, represents a “cluster of myths ... that focus on the defeat and victimization of the group,” whereby “the nation is presented as the perennial target of discrimination and persecution,” it “functions as a boundary-defining myth” and invests the oppressed groups with the aura of moral superiority vis-à-vis their oppressors.⁴ In the master narratives of most Balkan historiographies, the formation of Muslim communities in the Ottoman Balkans is part and parcel of the *martyrium* myth cluster: the Ottoman state is presented as one that followed a preconceived and systematic policy of religious and ethno-linguistic assimilation with respect to the non-Muslim populations of the Balkans. A complementary myth is that of the perennial resistance of the Balkan Christians who actively engaged in armed resistance activities aimed at driving out the Ottoman (usually conceptualized as “Turkish”) aggressors from the very first decades of Ottoman involvement in the Balkans. Staunch resistance to conversion (to Islam), especially under the leadership of the Orthodox Church, was a passive counterpart of armed resistance, which preserved not only religious, but also “national” identities; conversion could be explained as either “betrayal” (usually in order to preserve or enhance one’s worldly status) or “victimhood” in the hands of the oppressive, assimilationist Ottoman state.⁵

Anti-Ottoman mythicized historical narratives have tended to minimize the importance of Turcoman colonization in the Balkans to both counter modern Turkish irredentist myths and open the door for the possible reassimilation (or “reintegration”) of Muslim communities into the fold of modern Balkan Christian nations. In parts of the Balkans such as Bosnia, with its polymorphic cultural and political reality, the Ottoman past and the issue of the formation of Muslim communities have often found their place in competing parallel mythicized narratives which place varying emphases on historical continuity and discontinuity and accord differing historical judgments regarding the Ottoman legacy in general as well as demographic change in relation to one’s modern ethno-national identity.⁶ In their presentations of Ottoman rule in the Balkans, Turkish historians have traditionally emphasized the notions of Ottoman paternalistic tolerance, a just and stable Ottoman sociopolitical order, and the autonomy of non-Muslim

religious communities, despite the fact that the latter were discriminated vis-à-vis Ottoman Muslims.⁷

Not surprisingly, the Balkan national historiographies have paid uneven attention to the processes of Turcoman colonization, conversion to Islam, ethno-religious change, and the Islamization of cultural space in the early modern Ottoman Balkans. As Antonina Zhelyazkova has pointed out, “the volume of writings and the intensity of controversy within the different national historiographies bear no necessary relationship to the number of Muslims resident, or formerly resident, in the state concerned.”⁸ A comparison that may well illustrate this point is the one between Albanian and Bulgarian national historiographies, whereby scholars in Bulgaria (with its 12 percent-strong Muslim minority) have produced scores of works on ethno-religious change in the Ottoman period, usually based on limited Ottoman archival material and sometimes drawing on highly dubious “domestic sources,” while conversion to Islam in Albania, which ultimately transformed the country into a predominantly Muslim one, has not attracted comparable attention on the part of Albanian scholars.⁹ This can be largely explained with the different role that Islam played in the nation-building of different modern Balkan states.¹⁰

Of the regions that host the most compact and numerically significant Muslim communities in the modern Balkans—Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia, Thrace, parts of Macedonia, the Rhodope Mountains, and north-eastern Bulgaria (including Deliorman and Dobrudja)—only the case of Bosnian Islamization may be said to have been extensively researched and discussed in a relatively detached manner, largely thanks to the efforts of a large number of outstanding representatives of modern Bosnian Ottomanist and Balkan historiography.¹¹ In addition, one may highlight the efforts of several modern Macedonian historians who have made substantial and meaningful contributions to the study of ethno-religious change and the development of Islamic culture in the lands of modern Macedonia.¹² Modern Turkish historiography, while much better grounded in terms of access and usage of Ottoman primary sources, has produced a fairly limited amount of work on the formation of Muslim communities in the Balkans and has also been strongly influenced by issues related to the development of modern Turkish national identity.

Lastly, until the end of the Cold War Western scholars had also shown limited attention to the study of Muslim communities in the

Ottoman Balkans (with several notable exceptions, such as M. Kiel, H. Lowry, and M. Balivet). Such treatments have sometimes followed a distinctly “enlightening” approach, exerting efforts to “correct” the distortions of well established politico-historical myths developed by Balkan nationalist historiographies.¹³ This tendency has seen further development after the end of the Cold War, when not only more scholars from Western Europe and North America, but also a number of researchers within the Balkans have produced a number of works on both the period of Ottoman rule in the Balkans in general and the formation of Muslim communities in the Balkans and Balkan Islam in particular that have parted with the traditional mythicizing approaches of Balkan nationalist historiographies. Some of these works have alternatively followed a functionalist approach in treating conversion myths, analyzing myth-making as an inevitable element of human existence and emphasizing the impact such myths had on strengthening the coherence of emerging Balkan nations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁴

This recent relative upsurge in the study of the history of Muslim communities and Islam in the Balkans has been largely conditioned by the processes of democratization in Eastern Europe and European integration at large, which have eased access to archival and manuscript collections in the region, facilitated intellectual exchange, and eased pressure on scholars to fit the established frameworks of Balkan national historiographies. A good example is the development of current Bulgarian Ottomanist historiography, which features a number of authors who have broken away from the traditional national historical narratives of Ottoman dominance.¹⁵

Major Theories of Formation and Historical Development of Muslim Communities in the Ottoman Balkans

As outlined above, most of the major scholarly arguments regarding the formation of Muslim communities in the Balkans have been heavily influenced by modern political concerns, often taking extreme forms emanating from widely diverging conceptualizations of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans, seen by some as a “catastrophe” and by others as a “blessing.”¹⁶ A major division has developed around the relative

emphasis on the role of Turcoman Muslim colonization of Anatolian origin and conversion to Islam of local Balkan populations as the major factors in ethno-religious change in the region. The former has been heavily emphasized by Turkish scholars while conversion to Islam has been favored by scholars from the Balkans, whereby yet another division has developed—between the proponents of forcible conversion directed by the Ottoman state (either through brute force, or via “indirect pressure”) and voluntary conversion as a result of a number of factors, such as the quest for social and economic advancement, but also in the context of the growth of syncretic tendencies in the development of Islamic culture in the Balkans.¹⁷ While the view of religious conversion as being directed by the state has been emphasized by most nationalist-minded scholars in predominantly Christian Balkan societies, other historians have argued for a process of conversion that was gradual and developed as a result of the interaction between the emerging presence of the Ottoman state and incoming settlers from Anatolia and the specific regional, political, socioeconomic, and religious-cultural conditions in different parts of the Balkans.

Conversion-Oriented Explanations of the Formation and Development of Muslim Communities

By far the most extreme “theory” explaining the formation of Muslim communities in the Ottoman Balkans is the so-called “Conversion by the Sword” theory, which has been favored by a number of Balkan historians, where the domination of an Islamic polity and its institutions have been seen as a forced and unwanted imposition on the “natural course” of historic development of the region. It is still markedly widespread as an explanation of the presence of Muslim communities in the Balkans among most Balkan non-Muslims at the popular level.

Concisely put, this theory views the formation of Muslim communities in the Balkans as the result of a series of punitive actions on the part of the Ottoman state, whereby the latter aimed at the conversion of large population masses in the Balkans with the aim of strengthening its authority and in tune with popular general perceptions of Ottoman rule as oppressive and intolerant. It has been emphasized above all by Bulgarian scholars¹⁸ who have traditionally resorted to the use of a

small number of “domestic Slavic sources,”¹⁹ now known to be nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century fabrications,²⁰ that tell the story of the violent conversion of Christians mostly in the Rhodope Mountains by Ottoman troops in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The trope of violent conversion has later been used more widely to explain the presence of Muslim communities in all of Bulgaria and the wider Balkans. The *devşirme* (child levy) has also been conceptualized by many Balkan historians within this framework—as a coordinated effort on the part of the Ottoman state to weaken the non-Muslim communities in the Balkans on the way to the further Islamization of the region.²¹ In addition, the conceptualization of Christian neomartyrs as heroes who died for their faith resisting forced conversion to Islam, has been another important trope that became part and parcel of Balkan historical consciousness regarding the period of Ottoman rule regardless of the fact that the mentioned neomartyrs were in most cases recent converts who had apostacized.²²

Another popular historiographical perception relates to the notion of “indirect pressure.” It has been argued that by imposing a higher tax burden on non-Muslims and usually denying them access to political and administrative offices the Ottoman state purposefully created conditions that would reduce non-Muslims in the Balkans to gradually accept Islam.²³ What has been overlooked in this argument is that these forms of discrimination of non-Muslims have their roots in early Islamic history and were not introduced by the Ottomans, they could hardly produce visible results within a reasonable period of time, and there are no significant traces of any such “planning” in Ottoman sources. While political and socioeconomic discrimination of non-Muslims was an integral feature of premodern Islamic societies (similarly to the discrimination of religious minorities in medieval and early modern European states), it was not tantamount to a systematic policy meant to induce non-Muslims to convert.

Conceptualizations of conversion to Islam in the Ottoman Balkans as a result of direct or indirect pressure on the part of the state tend to attribute to the Ottoman state a nation-state-like proclivity to homogenize society as well as social and cultural space. They overlook some basic features of premodern Islamic empires, most notably the *dhimma* institute and the autonomy of non-Muslim communities, and tend to place a stigma on conversion to Islam as an “unnatural” choice that

could be made only under significant pressure from the state, whereby converts could be conceptualized alternatively as historical “victims” or “traitors.” Such an argument, together with the notion of violent conversion campaigns referred to above, has been employed to justify harsh treatment of Balkan Muslims in the modern age, and even their “de-Islamization.” Modern Balkan history provides an abundance of examples in this regard, suffice it to mention the case of the Bulgarian “Revival Process” in the 1980s.

Other scholars have emphasized conversion to Islam above all as a natural voluntary choice, motivated by the quest for socioeconomic advancement facilitated by the relative ease with which one might convert to Islam, pronouncing the *shahada* (statement of faith) in the presence of Muslim witnesses or just donning a turban.²⁴ This explanation of conversion to Islam has been earlier pursued by Richard Bulliet in a now classic study of conversion to Islam in the medieval period²⁵ and reminds of the notion of “adhesion” (which A. Nock differentiated from “conversion,” which he saw as the definite crossing of spiritual boundaries) as relating to more pragmatic attempts at achieving a status change conditioned by “natural needs.”²⁶ Scholars working in this vein have also highlighted the role of Islamic institutions (especially urban ones, such as pious endowments and the institutions they supported) in creating the proper milieu for the conversion to Islam of Balkan non-Muslims.

Finally, some scholars have placed a stress on the proselytizing role of non-state actors, especially that of dervishes and the related syncretic practices that included dual worship sites and the mingling of local pre-Ottoman religious tradition with religious practices and beliefs associated with popular Islam.²⁷ While some significant research has been done in the case of Bosnia, this fruitful avenue of research has not yet been explored to a satisfactory degree.

Colonization-Oriented Conceptualizations of the Formation and Development of Muslim Communities

An emphasis on Turcoman colonization in the Balkans as a major explanation of the formation of Muslim communities in different parts of the Balkans has been placed above all by Turkish scholars who have

tended to downplay the importance of conversion to Islam as an important factor in the process.²⁸ This work focused on the role of “colonizing dervishes” in sparsely populated areas of the Balkans, romantically conceptualized as “another America” that led to the emergence of hundreds of new Turcoman villages with the active direction and support of the Ottoman state.²⁹ Further analysis dealt with the role of forced deportations (*sürgün*) by means of which the Ottoman state would resettle Turcoman populations from Anatolia to the Balkans in order to ease population pressure in Anatolia and/or to displace and uproot politically troublesome populations that posed or could potentially pose a challenge to Ottoman authority in Anatolia. These interpretations have been duly criticized for attribution to the Ottoman state of excessive power and ability to control Turcoman migration and colonization, which is hardly borne out by the available archival evidence.³⁰ This work could also be criticized for the assumption that all Anatolian migrants into the Balkans were “pure” Muslim Turks, which neglects the issue of ethno-religious assimilation of the non-Muslim populations in Anatolia (mostly Greeks and Armenians) that dominated the peninsula before the late eleventh century. Other authors have made important contributions to the issue of *yürük* colonization in the Balkans, again closely associating it with state initiative and control.³¹

Assessment of the Theories on the Formation of Muslim Communities in the Ottoman Balkans

The arguments related to the formation of Muslim communities in the early Ottoman Balkans have been conditioned by both the socio-political and historiographic milieus in which various scholars of the Ottoman Balkans produced their works as well as by the nature of the sources which they utilized. Thus, the use of Ottoman administrative documents (especially Ottoman tax registers), which has largely dominated the study of Muslim communities in the Ottoman Balkans in the past several decades, has facilitated the development of arguments favoring conversion to Islam in a quest for advancing one’s socio-economic status, as well as the role of the state as the major actor in the process of Turcoman colonization in the Balkans. Scholars who have relied mostly on narrative sources, especially on ones related to Sufi

orders (such as *menakıbnames* and *vilayetnames*) have put forward valuable arguments about the formation of a distinctly “Balkan Islam” that incorporated pre-Ottoman Balkan beliefs and practices and thus facilitated significantly the spread of Islam in the Ottoman Balkans (both in the sense of Islamization of space, and individual conversion to Islam).

I would like to make three major methodological points with respect to the study of Muslim communities in the early modern Ottoman Balkans. First, despite the efforts of generations of scholars, much of the existing voluminous Ottoman source material has remained insufficiently studied, or plainly untouched. This is especially the case of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which very possibly saw an upsurge in the numbers of converts in most of the Balkans.

Secondly, I would like to emphasize the importance of regional differentiation in the formation of Muslim communities in the Ottoman Balkans. If one puts aside the issue of urban Islamization in Ottoman Balkan cities, one would observe that the most numerous and compact Muslim communities in the early modern Ottoman Balkans formed in specific parts of the region at different times, under different historical conditions, and often for different reasons. Thus, while the Islamization of Bosnia’s countryside took place largely in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the conversion of most of the population in Albania is traditionally assumed to not have taken place before the second half of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while the larger part of nearby Serbia never experienced the formation of significant Muslim communities in similarity to most of modern western Bulgaria. Along different lines, the initial formation of Muslim communities in the eastern Balkans seems to have been conditioned above all by Turcoman colonization (largely because of geographic proximity to Anatolia as well as to the nature of the early Ottoman conquests), while conversion to Islam was the dominant factor in the formation of Muslim communities in the Western Balkans (most notably in Bosnia and Albania). This also accounts for the fact that most of the Muslim communities in the eastern Balkans are Turkish-speaking, while those in the western Balkans retained the respective pre-Ottoman languages. In effect, one may speak of a “mosaic of enclaves” dominated by Muslim communities that formed in different ways and in different historical periods.

Thirdly, one should not forget that Islam in the Ottoman Balkans, just as elsewhere, was not a uniform phenomenon, conceptually, doc-

trinally, or in terms of practice. From the very beginning of Islamic history, there developed a multiplicity of voices and interpretations and there was never a viable attempt to come up with a unified statement of doctrine and practice (anything similar to the ecumenical church councils in the history of the Christian world). Indeed, this diversity is part and parcel of the development of Islam. The early modern Ottoman Balkans partook in this diversity, whereby one can distinguish between urban and rural Islam, stress the development of Sufi Islam, and point to the rise of practices and beliefs that were considered heretical by the Ottoman state and *ulema* establishment, especially those associated with antinomian Sufism. Just as elsewhere on the periphery of the Islamic world, Islamic culture in the Balkans developed as a result of a two-way cross-fertilization—while the region became an integral part of *Pax Islamica*, “Balkan Islam” came to develop its own distinctive regional coloring, which many scholars have referred to as “the indigenization of Islam.” It is not only that Balkan Islam integrated local, pre-Ottoman religio-cultural elements, which can be observed, for example, in the emergence of sites of dual (Christian/Muslim) worship (especially dervish *türbes*); the Balkans (or Rumeli) came to be internalized as part of the Ottoman (and Islamic) world in both the emerging “mainstream” Ottoman historiography and in “alternative” narratives reflecting the sensibilities of groups associated with the initial Muslim conquest of the region—Ottoman frontier lords, antinomian dervishes, and seminomadic Turcomans.³² While initially the presence of Islam was much associated with newcomers from Anatolia, by the mid-sixteenth-century Islam had become a culturally internalized part of the Balkan religio-cultural landscape; local-born Muslims (many of whom with pre-Ottoman Balkan roots) participated in and patronized urban Islamic culture, and the Sufi cult of saints was able to produce its own leading figures—the sixteenth-century Abdal (later Bektaşî) saint Demir Baba, born in Deliorman, being the most prominent example. This certainly contributed to the growing sociocultural acceptance of conversion to Islam.

That said, it is important to be cautious about making any generalizations about the formation and historical development of Muslim communities in the early modern Ottoman Balkans. Unfortunately, such generalizations abound in scholarly works, whereby scholars have tended to make general arguments about the whole region based on

a geographically and typologically limited source base, extending the conclusions made about their geographically limited areas of inquiry to the wider Balkans. In this relation, continuous work on regional case studies (within the Balkans), or comparative case studies while trying to utilize typologically diverse sources, seems to be the most methodologically sound avenue of research at this stage of the development of the field. It would be important to situate such case studies within the Ottoman historical and geographical context, rather than limit one's geographic area of inquiry following modern nation-state borders.

Going back to the actual patterns of formation of Muslim communities in the Ottoman Balkans during the early modern period, I will make several tentative remarks about the most important parts of the Balkans in which significant Muslim communities took root paying attention to the general timeline of formation and growth of Muslim communities in the peninsula, geographical patterns, the interplay between Turcoman colonization and conversion to Islam, and comparing urban centers and the rural countryside.

General Timeline

While documentary evidence, usually derived mostly from Ottoman tax registers, is nonexistent for the fourteenth century and sparse for the first half of the fifteenth, contemporary or near-contemporary Ottoman, Byzantine, Slavic, and Western historical narratives suggest that the first sizable Muslim communities in the Balkans appeared in the context of the Ottoman conquests in the second half of the fourteenth century, especially along the major routes of Ottoman expansion—along the ancient Via Militaris in Thrace as well as Via Egnatia, along the Aegean coast in Aegean Thrace and Macedonia.³³ These communities consisted primarily of Ottoman colonists from Anatolia who came into the Balkans as conquerors or migrants in search of improvement of their condition or, in some cases, as deportees forcibly resettled by the early Ottoman state from Anatolia to the Balkans. At this stage, conversion to Islam is usually assumed to have played a minimal role, largely limited to Balkan provincial military elites, some of whose members chose to convert in their quest to preserve their privileged status by entering the Ottoman *sipahi* cavalry.³⁴ However, at this point conversion to Islam

was not a condition to enter the Ottoman provincial *sipahi* cavalry; Christian *sipahis* existed till the late fifteenth century, but their number gradually dwindled, whereby Ottoman tax registers show that by the early-sixteenth-century membership in the Ottoman ruling (*askeri*) class (including the *sipahi* cavalry) was in practice conditional, among other things, on being a Muslim. The growth of Muslims in the Balkans during the fifteenth century has been related to the same factors—fairly substantial influx of Muslim Turkish-speaking settlers from Anatolia and a low rate of conversion to Islam, limited largely to urban centers in which the contact between autochthonous non-Muslims and Anatolian Muslim incomers was most intense. It was in this context that conversion rates, especially in urban centers, started rising by the end of the century. The sixteenth century is considered to have been the period in which conversion to Islam started playing a more substantial role in the growth of Muslim communities in the Ottoman Balkans, vis-à-vis colonization, with percentages of recent converts in many urban centers ranging from 15 to 30 percent, while many rural areas witnessed convert percentages in the order of 5 to 10 percent (of the total Muslim rural population). Nevertheless, some areas such as the northeastern Balkans (Dobrudja and Deliorman) as well as the Morea saw a substantial influx of settlers from Anatolia, either forcibly deported by the Ottoman state or fleeing Anatolia of their own will, largely in the context of political instability and violence in Anatolia generated by the emergence of the Twelver Shi'ite Safavid Empire of Iran (1501).³⁵ It is for the sixteenth century that we possess the only reasonably reliable premodern demographic snapshot of the Ottoman Balkans and Anatolia based on a series of Ottoman synoptic tax registers for the period 1520–1535.³⁶ The percentage of Muslims in the Balkans at the time is calculated at 22.2 percent (Christians being 77.4 and Jews 0.4 percent), whereby Thrace, Dobrudja, Macedonia, and Bosnia had the highest percentages of Muslim population.³⁷

As for the less well-studied seventeenth century, some scholars have asserted that it was in this period that conversion to Islam in the Balkans peaked, with conversion in the rural countryside outpacing that in urban centers, whereby the process continued through the mid-eighteenth century.³⁸ While related research findings are too sketchy to definitively accept such an argument without further systematic research in Balkan demographic history, a number of microhistorical

studies, analysis of the demographic development of the non-Muslim population in the Balkans as well as works addressing broader political, religio-cultural and socioeconomic changes in the Ottoman Empire allow us to tentatively accept it.³⁹ A rising rate of conversion to Islam in the Ottoman Balkans may be explained with the increased taxation burden on the Ottoman taxpaying population as well as the stiffening of religious boundaries in Ottoman society (and the resultant more pronounced discrimination of non-Muslims following the tenets of Islamic law) in relation to the halt of Ottoman territorial expansion and the rise of Muslim religious conservatism. Last but not least, it may be argued that by the seventeenth, and even more so in the eighteenth century, Islam and Islamic culture had become “indigenized,” i.e., they had acquired a centuries-long presence in the peninsula to make conversion to Islam (and being a Muslim in general) part and parcel of the local religio-cultural landscape, and thus socioculturally much more acceptable as compared to the first century or two of Ottoman rule. It has been largely accepted that conversion to Islam in the Ottoman Balkans lost momentum in the second half of the eighteenth century in relation to the rise of Balkan nationalism that entailed the appearance of non-Muslim Balkan bourgeoisie and the strengthening of the Orthodox Church.⁴⁰

What we know for sure is that according to the first Ottoman population census of 1831, the percentage of Muslims in the Ottoman Balkans was 37 percent (with the numbers for Christians, Muslims, Jews, Gypsies, and Armenians being 59.5, 0.8, 2.6, and 0.1 percent, respectively.⁴¹ Thus, the percentage of Muslims in the Ottoman Balkans seems to have increased by close to 60 percent since the early sixteenth century, but one has to take into account that the 1831 census did not include the territory of newly independent Greece, many of whose Muslims had migrated to other areas still under Ottoman control.⁴²

Geographical Differentiation

As mentioned above, the formation of Muslim communities in the Ottoman Balkans is characterized by a significant measure of regional and chronological diversity as well as with regard to the nature of formation of those communities.

In the eastern part of the peninsula, Upper Thrace (along the Maritsa Valley and Via Militaris) as well as Aegean Thrace along Via Egnatia and parts of the eastern Rhodopes experienced substantial Turcoman colonization at the time of the Ottoman conquest in the second half of the fourteenth century as well as during the fifteenth century, which resulted in the formation of a Turkish-speaking core of the respective regional Muslim communities. One may note the role of colonizing dervish groups that founded a number of new villages centered around dervish convents (*zaviyes*, *tekkes*).

In the northeastern Balkans, Dobrudja, and Deliorman, much depopulated by the late fifteenth century, were largely repopulated in the sixteenth century, mostly due to the influx of Anatolian settlers, some of whom were deported by the Ottoman state (especially in the case of Dobrudja) and others fled from Anatolia under the pressure of instability and violence in the context of the developing Ottoman–Safavid conflict. It was these regions that came to host most of the Balkan Kızılbaş communities. Like in Thrace, the role of dervishes as leaders in the colonization process seems to have been significant.

While the core of these communities in the eastern Balkans was Turkish-speaking, it was continuously augmented through the conversion (especially during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) of local non-Muslims (predominantly Orthodox Christians)—largely through the integration of converts from surrounding areas into wholly Muslim settlements, whereby such converts would undergo a process of ethno-linguistic assimilation. There were, however, numerous cases of isolated converts to Islam in neighboring Christian villages, although in most cases convert communities in predominantly Christian villages in the eastern Balkans would not take root and those isolated converts would migrate to Muslim rural settlements or to nearby urban centers, if such existed.

In the western Balkans it was the western Rhodopes, Albania, and Bosnia that developed the most compact and numerous Muslim communities. The Rhodopes, the home of Pomaks in Greece and Bulgaria today, saw the gradual conversion of most of the mountains' population. This process was a long one that lasted for more than two centuries—from the late fifteenth to the early eighteenth centuries—and is usually attributed to economic pressures (increasing tax burden), but

also to contacts between local Christian peasants and *yürük* populations in the region. As *yürüks* and local peasants usually occupied different altitude belts, not much happened in the way of ethno-linguistic mingling and Rhodope Pomaks remained Slavophone.⁴³

Albania is the least researched of all the areas in the Balkans with numerous and compact Muslim communities. While the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw the settlement of *sipahis* from Anatolia (with their households), the region never witnessed mass migrations of Muslim populations from elsewhere. The few scholars who have studied the Islamization of Albania in the early modern period have argued that the process of conversion gained momentum in the second half of the seventeenth and continued throughout the eighteenth century. Albanian conversion has been attributed largely to economic hardships, the activities of Sufi orders (especially the Bektashis) as well as the pressure of the Orthodox and especially the Catholic churches on Albanian crypto-Christians to renounce Islam and reconfirm their Christian faith in public, which contributed to the severing of connections between those communities and the church.⁴⁴

The case of Bosnia has always been seen as a special one, in relation to the large percentage of the population that converted to Islam fairly quickly (in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), the position of Bosnia as a frontier province, and the place that Bosnia, its Muslim community, and the latter's ethno-religious identity have occupied in modern Balkan history. The once popular thesis about the role of the allegedly heretical medieval Bosnian Church in the process of conversion to Islam has been downplayed.⁴⁵ While the colonization of Turkish-speaking Muslims has not been extensive, Ottoman archival material shows that many of the Muslim settlers in Bosnia were from surrounding regions in the Balkans. Apart from that, the urbanization of Bosnia, actively supported by the Ottoman state and centered around Islamic pious endowments and the institutions they supported, contributed to the rapid Islamization of cultural space, whereby urban Islam would lead the way in the Islamization of the province.⁴⁶

While the considerations on the formation of Muslim communities in different parts of the Balkans presented above were concerned mostly with the countryside, a few words must be said about the development of Muslim communities in Ottoman towns. Obviously, the

growth of Islamic institutions in Ottoman Balkan towns played a significant role in the overall process of Islamization. However, even in areas that never saw the growth of substantial Muslim communities in the countryside, most urban centers became characterized by dominant Muslim communities by the mid-sixteenth century.⁴⁷ In other words, while the dynamics and intensity of the formation of Muslim communities in the Balkan countryside varied considerably regionally and across time, the formation of Muslim communities in Ottoman urban centers had a more homogenous nature. While the Ottoman state had tolerated the existence of non-Muslim Balkan towns during the fifteenth century, by the mid-sixteenth century, no settlement in the Ottoman Balkans could be treated as an urban center without meeting two basic conditions: the presence of a market (which was the case in the pre-Ottoman Balkans as well) and the existence of a congregational mosque, which presupposed the presence of a sizable, if not dominant Muslim community. Ottoman towns owed much of their growth to their status as administrative centers as well as to the activities of pious endowments (*waqfs*) and the related Islamic religious, educational, cultural, and charitable institutions. One may also add the role of urban Sufi establishments, which, as was especially the case of Bosnia, might well have contributed to the accelerated pace of conversion to Islam of the population within the town itself.

Not less importantly, urban Muslims also enjoyed certain visible tax privileges; while they were exempt from the respective land tax (*çift resmi*) provided that they did not engage in agriculture, urban Christians, like non-Muslim peasants, uniformly paid *ispence* (usually understood to be the *çift resmi*'s equivalent land tax for non-Muslims, but in this case functioning more like a head tax being paid even if the levee did not practice agriculture), in addition to the canonical *cizye*.⁴⁸ A convert in an urban milieu could also mingle quickly into a large urban Muslim community (that also would feature a large number of recent converts). Thus towns also served as magnets for converts from rural settlements in their hinterlands as a convert moving from the countryside to a town could largely escape the ostracism of his former coreligionists, which was a significant factor that acted against conversion in the countryside. Ottoman towns especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed considerably higher rates of conversion than the rural countryside.

Colonization and Conversion

Turcoman colonization and conversion to Islam were the two major processes that directly influenced the formation and historical development of Muslim communities in the Ottoman Balkans. Although much more research is to be done in order to come up with more definitive and better substantiated arguments, it may be safely argued that while conversion to Islam in the western Ottoman Balkans was the dominant factor throughout the period of Ottoman rule, in the eastern Ottoman Balkans, Turcoman colonization played a more important role (vis-à-vis conversion to Islam) in the period from the conquest (i.e., the second half of the fourteenth century) to the mid- to late sixteenth century. The importance of Turcoman colonization in this context has been staunchly supported by Turkish scholars, above all Ö. L. Barkan, who also argue in favor of the dominant and proactive role of the Ottoman state as the main organizer of Turcoman colonization in the Balkans. Conversely, the role of Turcoman colonization has been downplayed by some Balkan scholars, most notably Nikolay Todorov, who have pointed to the low percentage of *yürük* nomads in the Balkans in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (15 percent of the Muslim population and only 3.5 percent of the total population of the peninsula).⁴⁹ It should be immediately said that (1) the *yürüks* were by no means the only Turcoman nomad group in the early Ottoman Balkans, but are the most readily recognizable in contemporary Ottoman administrative sources, being organized by the state in auxiliary military units enjoying a number of tax privileges, and (2) Turcoman nomads in general were not the only Anatolian colonizers in the early Ottoman Balkans. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which have been dubbed by some Ottomanists as the “Age of Conversions,” conversion to Islam has been argued to have played a more important role in the process of augmenting already existing Muslim communities with historic Turkish-speaking Muslim cores formed in the preceding centuries. While the present state of research does give tips in this direction, one is far from being able to make definitive statements.

Several important points may be made regarding the nature of Turcoman colonization. First, the available Ottoman source material (administrative, legal, and narrative) does not render enough evidence

regarding the all-powerful role of the state. Most of the new settlers from Anatolia seem to have migrated out of their own will, responding to socioeconomic and political pressures in Anatolia. However, while the Ottoman central government was far from being in full control of these population movements, it was fairly quick, at least from the second half of the fifteenth century onward, as Ottoman tax registers show, to adapt to these demographic changes and incorporate migrants from Anatolia to the eastern Balkans into the Ottoman socioeconomic framework by duly registering them as Ottoman taxpayers. This holds for both populations that had a permanent residence (i.e., were registered as a part of a specific rural settlement) and nomadic groups that were initially registered as “scattered” (*perakende*) or as a (nomadic) community (*cemaat*).⁵⁰ While there is no way to prove that the Ottoman state was able to register as taxpayers all newcomers, registrations of such “scattered” groups (usually *yürüks*) and the incidence of numerous cases of the sedentarization of formerly nomadic populations attests to the ability of the state to adapt and establish at least some significant measure of control in the distant provinces. As for the relations between colonizing dervishes and the Ottoman state, tax register records as well as attendant Ottoman law codes show that again, the state did not seem to have initiated, least so controlled, dervish colonization, but rather dervishes and their followers were the proactive agents of colonization and tried to actively negotiate tax exemptions and other privileges once they had settled in a new area. All this relates closely to current historiographical debates on the nature of the early modern Ottoman state and its ability to impose central authority in its far-flung provinces.

Regarding the process of conversion to Islam, while scholars have emphasized different factors to explain it, including economic pressures, religious syncretism, the individual’s quest for socioeconomic advancement as well as pressure on the part of the Ottoman state, it may be said that with the exception of the latter, which was limited if at all present, all such factors did play a role in one’s conversion at the individual or group level. Again, as in the case of regional differentiation in the formation of Muslim communities in the Balkans in general, it is difficult to make generalizations about the nature and dynamics of conversion to Islam in different parts of the Balkans and the process should be studied in the specific local historical contexts (with the distinction between urban and countryside milieus also being made). It is

also hardly possible to deconstruct the motivational matrices of individual converts and to assign specific weight to different factors and influences. Yet, as the cases of Bosnia, Albania, and the Rhodopes have shown, the worsening of economic conditions, especially in mountainous parts of the Balkans, can hardly be denied as a major factor for the accelerated pace of conversion in these regions, while the issue, especially in the case of the Rhodopes and Albania, awaits to be studied in further detail. If there is one overarching factor that I would point out with respect to the nature and dynamics of conversion to Islam in the early modern Ottoman Balkans, this would be the process in which the religio-cultural presence of Islam and Islamic institutions came to be viewed as a “natural,” integral part of the Balkan sociocultural landscape, which was achieved both through the process of mingling and integration of local traditions and the sheer maturation of Islam’s presence in the peninsula. This must have been one of the major factors thanks to which conversion rates would become substantial well after the Ottoman conquest of the respective areas of the Balkans (with the exception of Bosnia).

NOTES

- 1 Such attitudes have been ubiquitous in the nationalist Balkan historiographies as well as in public opinion. For the purposes of the present discussion, it suffices to give the titles of two works by Bulgarian authors: Ivan Snegarov, *Turskoto vladichestvo—prechka za kulturnoto razvitie na balgarskiia narod i drugite Balkanski narodi* [The Turkish rule—An impediment to the cultural development of the Bulgarian and the other Balkan peoples] (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1958), and Petur Petrov, *Po sledite na nasiliето* [On the traces of violence], 2 vols. (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1987).
- 2 Charles Verlinden, *The Beginnings of Modern Colonization: Eleven Essays with an Introduction*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), ix–xxi.
- 3 Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 102.
- 4 Pal Kolsto, “Introduction: Assessing the Role of Historical Myths in Modern Society,” in *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe*, ed. Pal Kolsto (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), 21.

- 5 George Arnakis, "The Role of Religion in the Development of Balkan Nationalism," in *The Balkans in Transition: Essays on the Development of Balkan Life and Politics since the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Charles and Barbara Jelavich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 115–144. See pp. 116–117, 126–133.
- 6 Srecko Dzaja, "Bosnian Historical Reality and Its Reflection in Myth," in *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe*, ed. Pal Kolsto (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), 105–107.
- 7 Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300–1600* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 7.
- 8 Antonina Zhelyazkova, "Islamization in the Balkans as a Historiographical Problem: The Southeast-European Perspective," in *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography*, ed. Fikret Adanir et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 223.
- 9 One exception is Selami Pulaha, *Aspects de démographie historique de contrées albanaises pendant les XV^e–XVI^e siècles* (Tirana: 8 Nentori, 1984).
- 10 I thank Victor Friedman for sharing his views on Albania on this issue with me.
- 11 Adem Handzic, "O islamizaciji u sjeveroistocnoj Bosni u XV i XVI vijeku," *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 16–17 (1966–1967), 5–48; M. Hadzijahic, "Turska komponenta u etnogenezi bosanskih muslimana," *Pregled* 18 (1966), 405–502; idem, "Sinkreticki elementi u islamu u Bosni i Hercegovini," *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 28–29 (1978–1979), 302–329; Nedim Filipovic, "Napomene o islamizaciji u Bosni i Hercegovini u XV vijeku," *Godisnjak Akademije nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine* 7, *Centar na Balkanološka Ispitivanja* 5 (1970), 141–167; Srecko Dzaja, *Konfessionalität und Nationalität Bosniens und der Herzegovina. Vorempirische Phase, 1463–1804* (Munich: Oldenborg, 1984).
- 12 Aleksandar Stojanovski, *Gradovite na Makedonija od krajot na XIV do XVII vek* (Skopje: Zavod za Unapreduvanje na Stopanstvoto vo SRM "Samoupravna Praktika," 1981); Metodija Sokoloski, "Islamizacija u Makedoniji u XV i XVI veku," *Istorijski Casopis* 22 (1975), 75–89; Nijazi Limanoski, *Islamizacijata i etnickite promeni vo Makedonija* (Skopje: Makedonska Kniga, 1993).
- 13 Kolsto, "Introduction," 2.
- 14 Ibid., 2–3; Maria Todorova, "Conversion to Islam as a Trope in Bulgarian Historiography, Fiction and Film," in *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory*, ed. Maria Todorova (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 129–157.
- 15 As a part of this trend one might mention, among others, Evgenii Radushev, Rossitsa Gradeva, Svetlana Ivanova, Grigor Boykov, and Maria Kiprovska.

- 16 Machiel Kiel, *Art and Society in Bulgaria in the Turkish Period* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1985), 33–55; Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans: Kisve Bahası Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670–1730* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1–8.
- 17 Most notably Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir iskân ve kolonizasyon metodu olarak vakıflar ve temlikler,” *Vakıflar Dergisi* 2 (1942), 279–386, and “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir iskân ve kolonizasyon metodu olarak sürgünler,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 11 (1949–1950), 524–569; 13 (1951–1952), 56–78; 17 (1953–1954), 209–237; M. T. Gökbilgin, *Rumeli’de Yürükler, Tatarlar ve Evlad-ı Fatihan* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1957); Feridun Emecen, Yusuf Halaçoğlu, and İ. Şahin, “Turkish Settlements in Rumelia (Bulgaria) in the 15th and 16th centuries: Town and Village Population,” *International Journal for Turkish Studies* 4 (1990), 23–40. To a lesser degree, Halil Inalcik, “Ottoman Methods of Conquest,” *Studia Islamica* 2 (1954), 103–129.
- 18 Bistra Cvetkova, *Geroichnata saprotiva na balgarite protiv turskoto nashestvie* [The heroic resistance of the Bulgarians against the Turkish invasion] (Sofia: Narodna Prosveta, 1960); Petur Petrov, *Asimilatsionnata politika na turskite zavoevateli* [The assimilatory policy of the Turkish conquerors] (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Balgarskata Komunisticheska Partia, 1964); Georgi Neshev, “Die bulgarische Kultur und die osmanische Eroberung,” *Bulgarian Historical Review* 2 (1974), 46–61.
- 19 The most important among these “domestic sources” are the so-called *Belovo Chronicle*, the *Batkun Chronicle*, Metodi Draginov’s *Chronicle*, and the *Historical Notebook*, all of them “discovered” and published by patriotic Bulgarians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While these sources were supposedly written by contemporary observers of the “tragic events” in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the originals were “lost” in one way or another. The published texts contain gross mistakes, such as the wrong names of Ottoman sultans. The texts of all these seemingly fabricated chronicles may be found in a collection of narrative sources on Bulgarian history. See V. Nachev and N. Fermandzhiev, eds., *Pisakhme da se znae* [We wrote it down, so that it be known] (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Otechestvenia Front, 1984).
- 20 Ilia Todorov, “Letopisniiat razkaz na Pop Metodi Draginov,” *Starobalgarska Literatura* 16 (1984), 62–75; Antonina Zhelyazkova, “The Problem of the Authenticity of Some Domestic Sources on the Rhodopes, Deeply Rooted in Bulgarian Historiography,” *Études Balkaniques* 4 (1990), 105–111.
- 21 George Arnakis, “The Role of Religion in the Development of Balkan Nationalism,” in *The Balkans in Transition: Essays on the Development of*

- Balkan Life and Politics since the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Charles and Barbara Jelavich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 120–124.
- 22 Tijana Krstic, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 121–164.
 - 23 Nikolai Todorov, “Za demografskoto sastoyanie na balkanskiia poluostrrov prez XVI–XVI vek,” *Godishnik na Sofiiskiiia Universitet—Filosofsko-istoricheski Fakultet* 52 (1959), 193–225, and *The Balkan City: Socio-Economic and Demographic Development, 1400–1900*, trans. P. Sugar (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983), 47–51; Maria Todorova, “Identity (Trans)Formation among Bulgarian Muslims,” in *The Myth of “Ethnic Conflict”: Politics, Economics, and “Cultural” Violence*, ed. B. Crawford and R. Lipschutz (Berkeley: University of California at Berkeley, International and Area Studies, 1998), 473. This argument has also been developed by Karl Binswanger in his *Untersuchungen zum Status der Nichtmuslime im Osmanischen Reich des 16. Jahrhunderts: mit einer Neudefinition des Begriffes “Dhimma”* (Munich: R. Trofenik, 1977).
 - 24 Machiel Kiel, *Art and Society*; idem, “Tatar Pazarcık: The Development of an Ottoman Town in Central Bulgaria or the Story of How the Bulgarians Conquered Upper Thrace without Firing a Shot,” in *Das Osmanische Reich in seinen Archivalien und Croniken, Nejat Göyünç zu ehren*, ed. Klaus Kreiser and Christoph Neumann (Istanbul: In Kommission bei Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 1997), 31–67; idem, “The Spread of Islam in Bulgarian Rural Areas in the Ottoman Period (15th–18th cc.): Colonization and Islamization,” in *Musiulumanskata kultura po balgarskite zemi*, vol. 1, ed. R. Gradeva and S. Ivanova (Sofia: IMIR, 1998), 61–125; idem, “The Ottoman Imperial Registers: Central Greece and Northern Bulgaria in 15th–19th Century: The Demographic Development of the Two Areas Compared,” in *Reconstructing Past Population Trends in Mediterranean Europe (3000 B.C.–A.D. 1800)*, ed. John Bintliff and Kostas Sboinas (Oxford: Oxbow, 1999), 195–218; Evgeni Radushev, *Pomatsite: Hristianstvo i Isliaam v zapadnite Rodopi s dolinata na reka Mesta, XV–30-te godini na XVIII-ti vek*, 2 vols. (Sofia: NBKM, 2005); Minkov, *Conversion to Islam*.
 - 25 Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).
 - 26 A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 7–10.
 - 27 Frederick W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929); Michel Balivet, “Deux Partisans de la fusion religieuse des chretiens et des musulmans au XVI siècle: Le turc Bedreddin de Simavna et le grec Georges de Trebizond,” *Byzan-*

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- 28 Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir iskân ve kolonizasyon metodu olarak vakıflar ve temlikler,” *Vakıflar Dergisi* 2 (1942), 279–386 and “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir iskân ve kolonizasyon metodu olarak sürgünler,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 11 (1949–1950), 524–569; 13 (1951–1952), 56–78; 17 (1953–1954), 209–237.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 279–386.
- 30 Zhelyazkova, “Islamization in the Balkans,” 231–232; Tsvetana Georgieva, *Prostranstvo i Prostranstva na Balgarite XV–XVI vek* (Sofia: IMIR, 1999), 154–155.
- 31 Gökbilgin, *Rumeli’de Yürükler, Tatarlar ve Evlad-ı Fatihan* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1957).
- 32 Krstic, *Contested Conversions*, 42–45.
- 33 Barkan, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir iskân ve kolonizasyon metodu olarak sürgünler,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 13 (1951–1952), 56–78; 17 (1953–1954), 209–237.
- 34 This last point has been substantiated by research on fifteenth-century Ottoman tax registers. See Inalcik, “Stefan Duşan’dan Osmanlı İmparatorluğuna: XV. asırda Rumeli’de Hristiyan sipahiler ve menşeleri,” in *Fatih devri üzerinde tetkikler ve vesikalar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1954), 137–184.
- 35 Strashimir Dimitrov, “Kam demografskata istoriia na Dobrudzha prez XV–XVII v.,” *Izvestiia na Balgarskoto Istorichsko Druzhestvo* 35 (1983), 27–61; *idem*, “Novi Danni za demografskite otnosheniia v Iuzhna Dobrudzha prez parvata polivina na XVI v.,” *Dobrudzha* 14–16 (1997–1999), 278–306; Nikolay Antov, “Imperial Expansion, Colonization, and Conversion to Islam in the Islamic World’s ‘Wild West’: The Formation of the Muslim Community in Ottoman Deliorman (N.E. Balkans), 15th–16th cc.” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2011), 208–268; Antov, “Imperial Expansion,” 165.
- 36 Barkan, “Essai sur les données statistiques des registres de recensement,” *passim*.
- 37 Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans*, 41–42.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 52; Krstic, *Contested Conversions*, 20.
- 39 Radushev, *Pomatsite: Hristianstvo i Islam*; Kiel, “Tatar Pazarcık,” “The Spread of Islam,” “The Ottoman Imperial Registers”; Bruce McGowan, *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe: Taxation, Trade, and the Struggle for Land, 1600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press/Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1981), 80–95; Madeline Zilfi, “The Kadızadeli: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul.”

- Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 45 (1986), 251–269; Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam*.
- 40 Minkov, *Conversion to Islam*, 57–63.
- 41 Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 109–110; Minkov, *Conversion to Islam*, 61–62.
- 42 Minkov, *Conversion to Islam*, 60–61.
- 43 Kiel, “The Spread of Islam”; Radushev, “Pomatsite: Hristianstvo i Islam.”
- 44 Peter Bartl, “Krypto-Christentum und Formen des religiösen Synkretismus in Albanien,” *Grazer und Münchener Balkanologische Studien* 2 (1967), 117–127; Zhelyazkova, *Razprostranenie na Islama v zapadno-balkanskite zemi pod osmanska vlast, 15–18 v.* (Sofia: Ban, 1990); John Kingsley Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes* (London: Luzac & Co., 1937, 1965), 70–73, 85–86.
- 45 John Fine, Jr., *The Bosnian Church, a New Interpretation: A Study of the Bosnian Church and Its Place in State and Society from the 13th to the 15th Centuries* (Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1975).
- 46 York A. Norman, “An Islamic City? Sarajevo’s Islamization and Economic Development, 1461–1604” (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2005).
- 47 Speros Vryonis, Jr., “Religious Changes and Patterns in the Balkans, 14th–16th Centuries,” in *Aspects of the Balkans: Continuity and Change: Contributions to the International Balkan Conference held at UCLA, Oct. 23–28, 1969*, ed. Henrik Birnbaum and Speros Vryonis, Jr. (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), 162–164.
- 48 Vasić, Milan, “Socijalna struktura jugoslovenskih zemalja pod osmanskim vlašću do kraja XVII vijeka,” *Godišnjak Društva Istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine* 37 (1986), 69–70.
- 49 Minkov, *Conversion to Islam*, 41–47.
- 50 Kovachev, *Opis na Nikopolskiia sandzhak*, 161; BOA TD 370/385–395.

CHAPTER 2

From Exorcism to Historicism: The Legacy of Empire and the Pains of Nation-Making in the Balkans

İpek K. Yosmaoğlu

It was not long ago, in the early 1990s, that public perception of the Balkans in the West was dominated by “ghosts” and “ancient hatreds” and shaped by sensationalist accounts of inexplicable violence disseminated through news channels, while otherwise reputable international organizations and academic presses perpetuated clichéd explanations instead of questioning them. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace dusted off a copy of their report on the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 and reprinted it in 1993 under the title “the Other Balkan Wars” as a response to the crisis unfolding in the former Yugoslavia at the time.¹ There was, of course, a demand for historical works that might shed light on the current events: L. S. Stavrianos’s classic survey *The Balkans since 1453*, first published in 1958, was given new purchase on life with a new edition in 2000, which was almost identical to the original with the exception of an introduction by Traian Stoianovich.² This was as much a testament to the strength of Stavrianos’s scholarship as it was to the apparently low level of expectations the field of history had for originality and new research with respect to the Balkans.

I am still not sure that the “Balkan ghosts” have been properly exorcised by the popular media, but scholarship on the Balkans has come a long way since then, perhaps partly as a reaction to the blatant ahistoricism of journalistic takes on the “ethnic complexity” of the Balkans. Two important developments ongoing since the 1990s have

inspired a broader shift in our understanding of the conflict in the Balkans during the post-Cold War era: the first is the coming of age of a new generation of historians in both North America and Southeast Europe, who started questioning the dominant paradigms and sacred cows of Balkan historiography. More importantly, these historians have been using local, including Ottoman language, sources in writing Balkan histories.³ Second, thanks to new research in the social sciences on the presumed causal connection between “ethnic complexity” and “ethnic conflict,” such circular explanations became highly suspect.⁴ Empirical evidence presented by these works demonstrated that pre-conflict cleavages, including those stemming from ethnic and religious difference, do not necessarily translate into an escalation in violence, but have the potential to become a contributing factor depending on the institutional frameworks in place before and after the onset of conflict.⁵

Thanks to these fundamental shifts in the historiography of the Balkans and the scholarship on ethnic conflict, we are now in a position to venture beyond the paradigm comfortably resting on the (nation-)state and religion. Before we congratulate ourselves and throw away these two pillars into the dustbin of history, however, it may be useful to reconsider what purposes they have served so far, whether they can be repurposed in a different configuration of the past, and what, if necessary, they need to be replaced with. In this essay, I will focus on Ottoman Macedonia between the Congress of Berlin (1878) and the outbreak of the Balkan Wars (1912). The events that ended with the collapse of the houses of Osman, Romanovs, and the Habsburgs were set in motion during this period. The resulting new (if imperfect) order in the region transformed not only its political but also human landscape. After I present a brief overview of the forces at play in the Ottoman Balkans leading up to this stage of the transition from empire to nation-state, I will shift my attention from the macronarrative to more localized expressions of this transition. My purpose is to challenge the state- and elite-centric versions of the events taking place, which, I hope, will help us to move one step closer to answering the fundamental question; namely, how do we explain different experiences of the challenges posed by ethnic complexity in the Balkans?

Rethinking the Role of Religion in the Ottoman Empire

Religion naturally plays a large part in the historiography of Southeast Europe under Ottoman rule. Conversions from Christianity to Islam and the Ottoman state's demographic policies are extremely important parts of this narrative, and lately they have been attracting more of the scholarly attention they deserve, as evident from Nikolay Antov's chapter in this volume. Despite the weight of this matter in understanding the region's history during the long Ottoman period, however, many scholars still treat the religion-state matrix of the Ottoman Empire as unchanging under the so-called "millet system." This approach has a tendency to view the period from 1453, when Mehmed II brought the monk Scholarios back from exile and "appointed" him as the Ecumenical Patriarch, until the end of Ottoman rule, as one where the relations of the empire's non-Muslim communities with the center were defined by the autonomy they received as members of different confessional communities, i.e., the "millets."

The millet system, however, was more a complex web of context-dependent arrangements, rather than a centrally supervised system.⁶ More importantly though, treating the role religion played in shaping state-society relations as unchanging and predominantly derived from the Islamic principle of the *dhimma* obscures the important changes taking place in the nature of the state that also shifted the definition of the Ottoman political nation, and the positioning of non-Muslims vis-à-vis these shifts. Communal autonomy, as it was experienced during the first two centuries of Ottoman rule in the Balkans, appears to be more the result of local variations in the arrangements the Ottomans made with the preconquest elite and the functions accorded to certain groups because of the strategic and economic functions they served.⁷ Unquestioningly accepting the "millet paradigm" as an explanatory model for social and political organization in the Ottoman Empire undermines the historical complexity of the experience of different communities before their transformation into nations, and implicitly credits the "national awakening" narratives manufactured retrospectively in order to bolster the legitimacy of the nation-state.

This is not to suggest that religion did not play an important role in shaping the perceptions of the Ottoman state among the empire's

non-Muslim subjects as well as their relations with Muslims. Quite the opposite is true, but this is a role that still requires careful qualification. After the emergence of the early modern Ottoman state in the seventeenth century, and the concomitant easing—at least in principle—of the barriers in joining the Ottoman ruling class, the Muslims increasingly viewed themselves as having a stake in the legitimacy of the Ottoman state whereas the barriers to this kind of social mobility remained firmly in place for the non-Muslims.⁸ There were notable exceptions to this rule such as the emergence of the Greek Orthodox (but not exclusively ethnically Greek) Phanariots as a parallel aristocracy in the Ottoman realms, but overall, being part of the ruling classes meant being Muslim.⁹ As for the non-Muslim masses, despite all the talk about the precocious multiculturalism of the Ottoman Empire, and the presumed “autonomy” its confessional communities enjoyed, life as a non-Muslim Ottoman commoner meant enduring not only the usual vagaries experienced by all the working classes, but also being subject to a set of mundane humiliations ranging from periodic raids on taverns to the symbolic violence of having one’s death recorded in registers with words otherwise reserved for animals: *telef olmak* as opposed to *vefat etmek*.¹⁰

One may object to this admittedly simplified version of Ottoman non-Muslims’ lives and their stake in the empire’s well-being and continuity.¹¹ We should indeed distinguish between the myths produced by twentieth-century nationalist narratives in describing the “centuries of slavery under Turkish rule,” and the legitimately objectionable conditions the peasantry, including converts to Islam, endured. Take, for instance, the *devşirme* or the “child levy,” which is regarded as one of the most (if not *the* ultimate) detestable aspects of Ottoman rule in the Balkans. The experience of giving up one’s child must no doubt have been a painful ordeal. Yet, considering the number of children collected, which is estimated to be between 500 and 1,500 per year, and their ages during collection, which turns out to be more in the teen and preteen years rather than early childhood, it becomes obvious that the demographic and emotional impact of the practice must not have been as heavy as once assumed.¹² It is also ironic that the demonization of the child levy happened during the heyday of nationalism rather than the heyday of the practice itself, which was entirely abandoned by the seventeenth century. The Ottoman Balkans remained *relatively*

calm and prosperous (compared with Anatolia, for instance) until the eighteenth century, and even then the first stirrings of revolt should be attributed more to localized expressions of grievances against the transformation in the empire's military/fiscal administrative mechanism than a generalized discontent against religious discrimination. However, combined with other historical forces that started taking shape in the eighteenth century, the lot of the empire's non-Muslim communities would eventually add up to a significant crisis of legitimacy for Ottoman rule—and not only in the European territories.

Among these forces, I should first mention (at the risk of terrifying my fellow Ottomanists) the inexorable decline in Ottoman power. If I use the word “decline” here, it is not because I subscribe to the ahistorical notion that it was all a fast, downward ride for the Ottomans from the death of Süleyman I until Mustafa Kemal alighted on the Black Sea port of Samsun. My purpose rather is to underscore the limitations on the Ottomans' capabilities in checking Russian expansion at the expense of their realms, and preserve the *Pax Ottomana* in southeast and east-central Europe. Even though the military record was uneven, and the Ottomans did perform quite respectably against, for instance, the Venetians, in capturing Crete (1669) and recovering the Peloponnese (1715) during times when they were presumably already in the throes of decay, it was also clear that they were facing great challenges in meeting the demands of war and provisioning their military, which placed a heavy burden on the peasantry in the Balkans. By the second half of the eighteenth century, the Christian Orthodox peasants whose forebears had been indifferent, if not welcoming of the fiscal order brought in by the Ottomans, had started to side with the Tsar's armies when the opportunity arose.¹³ In 1770, during the Russo-Ottoman war, a Russian squadron that sailed from the Baltic Sea managed to reach the Aegean Sea, and successfully incited a rebellion, known as “the Orlov revolt” in the Southern Peloponnese. Recent scholarship has attributed this uprising more to the rivalry among the Christian notables, or the *kocabaşıs*, in the *paşalık* of Morea than to nationalist peasant resistance against Ottoman rule.¹⁴ While it might indeed be too early to read Greek nationalist ideology into this revolt, the sheer audacity of the Russians who went on to burn down the Ottoman fleet sheltered in Çesme off the Anatolian coast, was clear indication that the Ottomans were falling behind at least in

military terms.¹⁵ I am afraid replacing the word decline with transformation does little by way of addressing the limits of Ottoman military and naval power at the time.¹⁶

The dissolution of the *timar*, the system of tax collection through prebendial appointments, and its gradual replacement with tax farms which became lifetime holdings, or *malikane-mukata'a*, after 1695 are no longer considered to be ominous signs of Ottoman decline, but a rational solution to the central treasury's need to increase cash flow due to changes in technologies of warfare and optimize revenue extraction.¹⁷ While the privatization of revenue collection did stabilize the tax base and reinforced the connection of the periphery to the center by creating a class of notables whose legitimacy derived from the privileges bestowed on them by the Istanbul elite, it also served to strengthen centrifugal forces that could not reliably be contained or appeased by promises of a government position.¹⁸ As Fikret Adanir argues, the degree of decentralization by the last decades of the eighteenth century "implied a direct threat to the political regime, which had already suffered a loss of legitimacy."¹⁹ The power-sharing arrangement between the center and the periphery, now partitioned into spheres of influence under various power magnates, was not a sustainable solution to the problem of administering the empire's far-flung provinces. The interests of the provincial lords, or *ayans*, did not always align with those of the center, or, for that matter, with those of the peasantry that maintained the large tracts of *çiftlik* lands the *ayans* de facto owned. The situation in the Balkans deteriorated to the point of anarchy after 1785, when the first incidents involving bandits, or *kırcalı eşkiyası* occurred.²⁰ The *kırcalı* carried certain similarities to the *celali* rebellions that had wreaked havoc in the Anatolian countryside in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in their extensive disruption of trade, agriculture, and settled life, their seemingly indiscriminate brutality against village and town dwellers, and finally the presence of disgruntled professional soldiers among the ranks of the rebels. Unlike with the *celali* rebellions, however, the response of the central authority this time was to move forward with plans of reining in the power of the periphery and streamline military recruitment and training rather than strike a compromise with the brigands. The relations between Istanbul and the Balkan provinces at the turn of the nineteenth century would be shaped by this centralizing push and the

reaction on the part of the local power magnates, on the one hand, and the repercussions, direct and indirect, of the French revolution and the revolutionary wars in Europe, on the other.

The Ottoman Crisis of Legitimacy Reimagined

Ottoman historiography of previous generations and Balkan nationalist historiographies display widely different interpretations of the dawn of the long nineteenth century in the Ottoman Balkans. The former tends to view the period as one of Istanbul-centered reforms, well-intentioned, but ultimately useless, toward the creation of the modern Turkish nation-state. The latter, on the other hand, subscribes to a different version that ignores not only the “Ottoman” aspect of national historiography, but also excises the meddling influence of “other” elements than one’s own national group from the narrative. A common trait shared by these teleological histories of the nation is the privileged position they accord to the national elites despite their ostensible emphasis on the “people.” That the ultimate price of liberation was death, deportation, and ethnic cleansing for most people does not quite occupy much space in these versions of history, and when it does, it is always the “other side” that bears responsibility for such reprehensible acts.

The view from the periphery, as opposed to views not only from Istanbul, but also from Sofia, Belgrade, Bucharest, or Athens (or Vienna and Paris, for that matter), is not as tidy, however. The picture becomes even more complicated as new research keeps throwing a wrench (or several) into the works. To be sure, what I am talking about is not a sea change brought about by sudden discoveries, but the cumulative effect of a patient, slow-paced reading of the archives against the grain. The early-nineteenth-century constellation of forces in the Balkans seems to be quite blurry, the alliances shifting, and loyalties not always taken for granted, all of which underscore the point that we should not view this period as one that set in motion the events, for good or for bad, that ultimately created the present political geography of the region, presumably fulfilling (if only partially) the principle that the political and national unit be congruent—and indivisible, if I may take the liberty to add this last adjective onto Ernest Gellner’s succinct definition of nationalism.

Consider some of the familiar outlines of Ottoman historiography concerning the reforms enacted by the Selim III and Mahmud II, for instance: a reform-minded, progressive sultan fights the good fight against a host of reactionary forces, led and enabled by the janissaries. Sadly he loses, but his more determined and wily successor quite literally blows the bad janissaries to pieces, and moves on with the same kind of determination to unleash his justifiable wrath on the uppity notables in the provinces. Likewise, the role of the uprising in 1804 as a locomotive for Serbian nationhood, and the example set by the Greek revolution of 1821 to other “enslaved” peoples (some “doubly enslaved” by the hegemony of the Patriarchate) to rise up and demand their liberty are other well-known and well-worn elements of the same narrative told from the perspective of the subject peoples of the Ottoman Empire. Certain details of these protagonists’ biographies do not seem to fit the modernization/national liberation narratives, however, and neither does the course of events conform to the linear path that should have been drawn by the progress of nationalist ideas by the early nineteenth century. However, nationalism was not a dominant ideology at the time even among the very same people who were later accorded the status of national heroes, let alone among the warlords of the Ottoman periphery.

The case of Pasvanoğlu Osman Paşa of Vidin, a person who has the rare distinction of being vilified by both Turkish and Serbian historiography, is a telling example in this regard. Part “violent specialist,” and part “political entrepreneur,” Pasvanoğlu Osman Paşa thrived in the territory of the Habsburg–Ottoman borderlands by making himself indispensable for the sultan as a bulwark against the Austrians even as he maneuvered to escape attempts by the same to finally get rid of this powerful magnate. Osman Paşa made clever use of the tools at his disposal such as extending his revenue base by taking advantage of the *malikâne* system, recruiting disgruntled janissaries and peasants, and playing into the resentment against the center-led fiscal reforms meant to raise revenue for Selim III’s experimental new army, the *Nizâm-ı Cedid*. Most importantly, he was very skillful in alternating mocking challenges to central authority with well-timed military assistance during times of dire need, such as the war against Austria. Osman Paşa controlled a vast expanse of territory centered in Vidin and his military force was estimated to be 12,000 strong, but he had his eye on a

bigger prize, namely, the Paşalık of Belgrade.²¹ This ambition placed him at the center of a power struggle against Istanbul, which, devoid of any other means to check Osman Paşa's extending sphere of influence, resorted to the time-honored method of pitting one magnate against the other—or, as it happened in this case, many magnates against one: a veritable “who’s who” list of notables participated in the 1798 campaign to contain Osman Paşa. Tepedelenli Ali Paşa, İsmail Bey of Serres, Tırsınıklıoğlu İsmail, to name a few, were among those commanding an army of 80,000 men, but the campaign failed.²² Not only did Osman Paşa manage to save his skin, he was finally bestowed with the official titles of *vezir* and *paşa* by the same sultan (Selim III) who had demanded his execution.

Osman Paşa's oppressive acts against the locals in the *paşalık* of Belgrade were directly influential in precipitating the Serbian Uprising of 1804.²³ Considering his reputation as a ruthless reactionary who gave shelter to the abusive janissaries of Belgrade, Osman Paşa's association with Rhigas Velestinlis, the “protomartyr” of the Greek revolution, may come as a surprise, but it was indeed “Passavanoglou” whom Velestinlis implored not to “remain impassive” in his famous anthem, the “Thourios,” calling on all the oppressed peoples of the Ottoman domains to throw off their yoke.²⁴ Pasvanoğlu Osman Paşa and Rhigas Velestinlis may seem strange bedfellows at first, but their association was not an exceptional one in the Ottoman Balkans at the dawn of the nineteenth century where alliances were made, violated, and remade not on abstract principles of national liberation, but on the immediate expediency of local politics. In addition to Velestinlis, the enemies of the Ottoman state with whom Osman Paşa palled around included Sofronii, the Bulgarian Bishop of Vratsa, and Kara George, the leader of the first Serbian Uprising against the janissaries protected by none other than the Paşa himself.²⁵ These unexpected connections, recovered through meticulous archival research, significantly muddle the national master narratives of Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia.

By the time Pasvanoğlu Osman died in 1807, the Serbian Revolt, which had started as a reaction against the terror of the janissary *dayıs* regime in the Belgrade Paşalık had produced the unintended but welcome outcome of an experience of self rule and the right to form militias among the Serbian population. It is hard to argue, based on this fact alone, that the course of history would inevitably run toward

the nation-state, and simply wrong to make a teleological connection between the Serbian revolt and the ethnic exclusivity that later characterized nationalism in the Balkans. Yet, we should recognize that this experience was irrefutably linked to the emergence of the idea of Serbian nationness. In other words, the political and social climate of the early nineteenth century should be interpreted in a way that can accommodate alternatives to nationalism and envision possible outcomes other than the nation-state without discounting the importance of these events in subsequently shaping the notion of political sovereignty based on the principle of nationalism.

The career of Tepedelenli Ali Paşa of Ioannina, the other infamous “bandit paşa” of Rumeli at the time, is another example of how the push by the Ottoman center to eliminate or at least curb the influence of powerful magnates in the provinces interacted with popular resentments and unstable political alliances against a background of revolutionary waves reaching as far as the southeastern edges of Europe. Ali Paşa’s notoriety for cruelty and eccentric style, while duly deserved, were partially based on legend personally cultivated by the paşa himself.²⁶ Ethnically Albanian, culturally Ottoman, and surrounded by an entourage of Greeks and Albanians, Ali Paşa Tepelena governed Epirus from 1787 until his dismissal by the sultan in 1820. At the height of his power, his sphere of influence included almost the entire region of mainland Greece excluding parts of Macedonia and Attica. His place is controversial in both Turkish and Greek historiography and his political motivations defy any attempt to classify them along retrospectively assigned national definitions. Even though his execution order cited, among other things, his assistance to the “infidels of the Morea,” Tepedelenli Ali Paşa was no revolutionary, and his legacy in Greece is one of cruel and arbitrary rule rather than a model of enlightened despotism that he attempted to cultivate. He might have been the only person capable of preventing the rebellion that broke out in the Peloponnese in 1821, but Istanbul was too busy trying to subvert him to think about preempting an even more substantial threat. It is ironic that in the end, another powerful Albanian from the periphery, Mehmed Ali Paşa of Egypt, would be summoned by the sultan to deal with the rebels in the Peloponnese.

The Greek revolution should be viewed differently from seemingly similar rebellions against Ottoman authority in the Balkans, as well

as the 1770 rebellion in the Peloponnese, as far as the emergence of nationalism in the Balkans is concerned. While we cannot overlook the local, rather than imperial or national, tensions brewing in the Peloponnese as the direct and immediate contributors, we should also recognize that the political impact of the Greek revolution went further than its immediate place of inception. This was not only because of its failed antecedent led by Alexandros Ypsilantis in the Danubian Principalities, and the favorable climate created by philhellenism, but because of its potential to inspire and galvanize later movements among an entirely different class of people than those who fought in the Peloponnese: the Greek-speaking (not all of whom were ethnically Greek) merchant bourgeoisie and clergy of the Balkans, the Black Sea littoral, and Asia Minor. The Ottomans were shocked at the speed with which the rebellion broke out and the resolve of the rebels, and for good reason: this was no ordinary revolt but an event that could claim victory for a brand new ideology.²⁷ Ironically, it also ended the ascendancy of the Phanariot elite that had until then acted not only as an agent of hellenization for their Orthodox retinues of humble Bulgarian, Albanian, Vlach, and Romanian origins, but also mediated their integration into Ottoman governance, creating a significant class of Orthodox Christians who had a stake in the legitimacy of Ottoman imperial rule.²⁸

These developments, as significant as they were, should not be read in a teleological sequence of nation-making. There was still a lot of ground to cover between early-nineteenth-century revolutionary currents at the periphery of the empire and the emergence of nation-states, and plenty of alternatives to the category “nation” as a form of communal organization and a basis for political demands existed and were experimented with. As the Phanariots reeled from the blow they received with the Greek Revolution, and the Greek-speaking high clergy reluctantly made small concessions to the demands of those who saw the Phanariot nation-fusion as nothing other than Greek oppression, the Ottoman central bureaucracy introduced a set of reforms aimed to create citizens out of various confessional groups of the empire. The Tanzimat reforms, as they were called, followed Mahmud II’s centralizing push, and introduced a series of legal and administrative changes. These reforms have been viewed as benign but insufficient measures to strengthen the central state at best, and half-hearted (or even cynical) attempts to distract European observers at worst.

While the reforms did not perform miracles, they should not be seen merely as tools at the hands of the central bureaucracy meant to consolidate their own power.

The Tanzimat reforms were as much about the provinces as they were about the center, and when the frame is provincial, we see an entirely different picture. For one thing, far from being incomprehensible to the common folk of the Ottoman periphery, the reforms were interpreted and indeed put in practice precisely by the people they were intended for—in quite inventive ways, one might add, and not in order to undermine state power.²⁹ For another, the way they were interpreted and negotiated at the local level also suggests that the demise of the Ottoman state was not a foregone conclusion even in the restive Danubian borderlands of the empire.³⁰ It is true that the relative success of Midhat Paşa in the newly created Danubian *vilâyet* in quelling tension by implementing not only the basic Tanzimat principle of equality of Muslims and Christian before the law but also by investing in public works, infrastructure, education, and public health, and introducing novel methods of governance such as credit cooperatives for farmers, also had the unintended consequence of creating a favorable climate where nationalist ideas could take root subsequently. Yet, it is hard to argue that the peasants who had learned to “speak Tanzimat,” or clerks whose pensions depended on the continuity of the state, would readily give up their lives for the vague promise of a free and independent Bulgaria.³¹ Nationalism was one among many ideologies popular at the time among the educated classes of the Ottoman Empire, but this was hardly the case for the agrarian classes that made up the bulk of the population, and who overwhelmingly identified with Orthodox Christianity as the basis of their collective identity.

But in the end nationalism, and the nation-state as the principle of political legitimacy, indisputably prevailed. Despite periodic declarations anticipating its demise, the nation-state is alive and well. Its robust presence makes it all the more difficult to envision a time when the nation-state was not the only form of political organization people could associate with and found worth dying for. Historians know that those days are in fact not that long ago, but even historians need to scrutinize the process through which the nation-state replaced alternative forms of political sovereignty. One does not need to subscribe to a strictly modernist reading of nationalism to concede that its ultimate triumph

was not divinely ordained, or part of human history's natural evolution. We could make a similar argument about the demise of the Ottoman Empire. While we can admit that this was an overdetermined event, we still have to answer the questions of why it happened the way it did and why it was accompanied by the level of violence that it was. We cannot, in any case, separate the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire from the process that accompanied it, namely, transition(s) to nationhood.

By the time of the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Ottoman sovereignty in Southeast Europe was preserved more as a function of maintaining the European balance of power than recognition of Ottoman territorial integrity. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire had found itself unable to protect its domains without allying with one of the Great Powers, even Russia when necessary. Crises such as the conflict in Lebanon and the April Uprising in Bulgaria were used as a pretext for intervention by the Powers, who had long used "protection of non-Muslims" as a convenient excuse for keeping the Ottomans in line. The Ottomans' diplomatic and military dependency was accompanied by growing indebtedness to European financial institutions, which would eventually result in their loss of control over their public finances after the establishment of the Public Debt Administration in 1881.

While nationalist sentiment was still quite far from ubiquitous in the mid-to-late-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, resentment was aplenty. The Muslims looked suspiciously, to put it mildly, at their Christian neighbors, who, in their perception got rich under the protection of the Europeans as the thankless job of fighting the empire's interminable wars fell on the shoulders of the Muslims. The negative sentiment against Christians was more acute in regions where Muslim refugees escaping Russian imperial expansion lived in dense numbers. They were easily recruited into groups of *başibozuks* (irregular bands) occasionally unleashed upon Christian communities. Mutual resentment was not limited to the Muslim-Christian division either; by the middle of the nineteenth century Christians had sufficient quantities of it built up along sectarian divisions. While hardly the elements of a harmonious society, these resentments should not be read as some form of protonationalism. They were, however, instrumental in bringing forth the conditions under which ostensibly homogenous nations were created out of the human complexity of the Ottoman Empire.

New Challenges in the Age of Nationalism: The View from Macedonia

The struggle for Macedonia emerged out of the post-Congress of Berlin climate of insecurity about the Ottoman Empire's near future, but it was as much a fight between the Greek-, Bulgarian-, and, to a more limited extent, Serbian- and Vlach-speaking agents for control over territory, as it was against Ottoman domination. One might argue that the origins of the struggle went back to the creation of an autocephalous Bulgarian Exarchate in Constantinople in 1870.³² The Exarchate was granted only fifteen dioceses, all in Danubian Bulgaria according to the original imperial decree that sanctioned its establishment, but the same decree also included a clause that stated that the Exarchate could acquire more dioceses in districts where more than two-thirds of the Christian population voted in favor of it in a plebiscite. This clause, as far as the Ecumenical Patriarchate was concerned, was the source of many troubles. As the resistance of the Bulgarian-speaking educated classes started to gain ground against what they perceived to be unfair Greek hegemony, more districts shifted their allegiances to the Exarchate. There were, however, large areas where the Slavic-speaking population was divided in terms of their sectarian affiliation, and did not necessarily want to sever their ties with the Patriarchate even as they kept asking for priests and schoolteachers who could "speak their language." Most of these areas happened to be in Ottoman Macedonia, comprised of the provinces of Salonika and Monastir and parts of Kosovo and Adrianople.

The sectarian tension between the Exarchate and the Patriarchate proved to be far more significant than a doctrinal matter. In fact, the sectarian strife was pivotal for the Christian Orthodox peoples' transition to nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia at the turn of the twentieth century, and indirectly impacted the same process for the region's Muslim inhabitants. It was more important than other processes of nation formation such as standardized education, print capitalism, or industrialization, not least because such modern trappings were largely lacking at the time in the Ottoman Empire. But sectarian difference carried much more potential than all of these other factors because of the importance of religion in shaping the lives of people who were pious

in a way we may find hard to comprehend. This piety was as much about relating to one's community and organizing the chores and joys of one's being as it was about other-worldly redemption. Unlike their educated compatriots in big towns and cities, the peasants of Ottoman Macedonia did not envision a normative, secular world separate from the reach of the church as a possibility. Another key point here was that the national elites understood the importance of mass mobilization for a political movement to be successful, and used religion as a perfect tool to that end.

This is not to deny the role played by the popularity of secular notions of nationhood among the educated classes in the Balkans, and the educational establishments founded by them. These were no doubt influential in disseminating the idea of nationhood to a larger public and drafting adherents to their respective causes, but even so, there was also an awareness among the leadership of these movements that their political goals might be a hard sell among a population whose world-views and specific life circumstances did not make them ideal candidates for interrupting (or giving up) their lives to work in the service of an abstract entity called the nation. It is quite telling, in this regard, that education was seen and used as a two-track method of nationalization by the Greek intelligentsia in Macedonia. They were aware of the "linguistic difficulties" of a significant portion of parish school students. For these children who could hardly speak a word of Greek, the curricula had to be different from those appropriate for their peers in the Greek Kingdom, or even elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire. It seems that even some of the schoolteachers in these areas so critical for the future of "Hellenism" had a very rudimentary knowledge of Greek.³³ As early as 1883, the members of the Greek national elite were aware of, and actively looking for a method to address this problem. The Greek consul in Monastir, in a letter to the president of the Society for the Dissemination of Greek Letters, argued that establishing schools in rural areas inhabited by "Bulgarophone" communities, while having potential for the long run, was not a viable policy to address immediate concerns. Unlike their more urbanized compatriots, who appreciated the importance of speaking and writing Greek because they had to travel and carry out business transactions (presumably with other Greek speakers), these communities consisted of "peasants who cultivate the land and never move around." Therefore, the only feasible

method for accessing these communities was not through education, but through “zealous and influential priests.”³⁴

Religion, therefore, was more suitable a tool for shaping the consciousness of the peasants and of their children into nationness. The already-existing Exarchist/Patriarchist Schism was an available framework around which nationhood would be defined. It is important to note, however, that the Schism, as convenient as it was for providing a benchmark for what national difference should look like, did not quite function as the litmus test of nationality. Linguistic divisions did not necessarily correspond to sectarian ones, and conversions to and from the Patriarchate did not follow a predictable pattern. There were cases, for instance, where the residents of a certain district would demand a Slavic-speaking priest and/or schoolmaster, but did not wish to shift their allegiance to the new church. In cases where part of a community had converted to the Exarchate, it was common practice to work out an arrangement for the common use of the church and school buildings by the Exarchists and Patriarchists.

Sharing church buildings in rotation was a compromise that seems to have worked for all parties involved until the involvement of armed bands in the conflict. Far from being a zone beyond transgression, churches were specifically targeted by bands fighting on all sides. In fact, many of these attacks used religious symbolism to augment the impact of their message. Examples included burning of liturgical books and objects, theft of ceremonial robes, and humiliation of priests. Worse, churches were often the sites of physical violence, often during times of mass or celebration. Even so, as the bans occasionally issued by priests proscribing the attendance of rival sects’ churches reveal, despite an ostensibly irreversible sectarian rift, intermingling among the two communities was the norm rather than the exception until very late in the conflict, specifically after 1904–1905.³⁵

The winter of 1904–1905 was the time when guerrilla warfare between the Greek and Bulgarian and Macedonian factions intensified as the Greek government stepped up its efforts to protect the “unredeemed Greeks” in Macedonia from what they viewed as imminent assimilation into an expanding Bulgaria. And as the fear of losing Macedonia rose among the Ottoman statesmen, they made common cause with the Greek elements fighting against the Bulgarians in the region, and started a hardly disguised collaboration with the Patri-

archate in order to stop conversions to the Exarchate among the Slavic-speaking peasantry. The outcome was a steep increase in incidents of violence. The presence of a “reformed gendarmerie” force, trained under the guidance of an international body of officers, did not help much by way of protecting the peasantry against threats from armed groups in the region as well as exactions by the Ottoman soldiers and irregulars. With the involvement of armed groups who enforced their orders by pain of death, it became increasingly difficult to maintain the fragile compromise that allowed the two communities to exist side by side, tolerating, if not celebrating the other side’s rights to the church and school buildings, and a burial site for their dead.

Scholarship on communal violence often talks about a stage of “dehumanization” before actors in a conflict situation can harm a fellow human being without suffering pangs of guilt.³⁶ According to cultural and anthropological takes on communal violence, this process of dehumanization is an essential part of legitimization of violence.³⁷ This process was facilitated by (and often overlapped with) what Charles Tilly calls “mechanisms of boundary activation,” whereby “social interactions ... increasingly (a) organize around a single us–them boundary and (b) differentiate between within boundary and cross-boundary interactions.”³⁸ Looking at the archival record on Ottoman Macedonia at the turn of the twentieth century, we can identify various boycotts issued and enforced by the activist agents on all sides of the conflict as one of the principal mechanisms of boundary activation. Banning the members of one’s community from patronizing businesses of the “other side,” effectively minimized contact between the rival communities, and enforced the same boundary in the otherwise neutral space of the market place.

These bans, of course, did not carry much weight without the enforcement by agents with access to means of coercion; physical in the case of “violent specialists,” and spiritual in the case of priests, many of whom also acted in the capacity of “political entrepreneurs.” It was only through the work of these agents that the boundary activation mechanisms became effective, and also triggered a parallel process of polarization. In other words, religious difference was not enough to sustain and “warm up” a conflict to the point of boiling without the deliberate actions of political actors who stood to further their own agendas through conflict. As a consequence, what used to be a narrow

difference between Exarchist and Patriarchist was transformed into a deep rift separating the two communities and normalizing rigid homogeneity in opposition to the fluid conception of self and community which had defined life before.

At this point, it is also important to note that the seemingly random and ubiquitous acts of violence immediately before and after the Ilinden Uprising of 1903, such as attacks on villages or assassinations of specific persons, followed a certain internal logic in the sense that, as brutal as they were, they were aimed specifically in order to deter denouncement, enforce collaboration, and punish those who strayed. They fit, in other words, the definition of the term “selective violence.” More importantly, they coalesced around a few sites rather than being scattered across the land at random, underscoring the importance of insurgency-favoring elements such as geography in determining the intensity of armed conflict in a given region, and also revealing a certain pattern to the attacks. After the clashes intensified with the involvement of the Greek *andartes* (resistance fighters) and their Ottoman backers, on the one hand, and the increasing rivalry between different factions of the Macedonian revolutionary movement and Bulgarian-backed Centrists, on the other, the incidents started to shift toward something closer to “indiscriminate violence,” meaning that one could be targeted simply for who they were perceived to be by the other side, rather than for what they had done. This was the point at which it became impossible to “sit on the fence” or hedge one’s bets for survival; it was also a prelude to the all out destruction that would be brought on by the Balkan Wars and World War I.

Conclusions

The history of the Balkans has conventionally been told in a state-centric narrative, and the struggle for territory in Macedonia at the turn of the twentieth century is not an exception. Textbook accounts present a narrative of the period from the eighteenth to the twentieth century as one of national (re)generation movements naturally gaining momentum as they approach the ultimate goal of a nation-state. The Orthodox Church plays a central role in its capacity as a repository of national consciousness and refuge through centuries under the double

hegemony of the Sultan and the Patriarch. Islam plays a similar role in the definition specifically of Bosnian and Turkish national identity. I do not think this is an *entirely* obsolete paradigm. Nor do I suggest that we completely throw it away because the relation between state and religion is not something we can simply ignore, particularly in a historical context such as that of the Balkans. Moreover, the emergence of the idea of nationhood and the triumph of nationness as the ultimate basis for political legitimacy were the products of a process that cannot be decoupled from state modernization and the ethnicization of religion. I suggest, instead that we *update* this paradigm to extend historical agency beyond the circle drawn by state actors and political entrepreneurs, and pay more attention to the experience of the people in whose name these states were founded.

There are several reasons why such a revision might be helpful beyond its correction of the obvious asymmetry dominant in the historiography of the Balkans that presents the state as the main axis of the story. First, it allows us to see and understand the state in question differently, especially concerning its nature and legitimacy as perceived by society, including alternative state-seeking agents. For instance, a closer look at life in the Macedonian countryside during the first decade of the twentieth century reveals that we cannot simply classify this as a case of violence brought about by a failing state and so-called “ethnic” nationalism running rampant. There is enough evidence to suggest that not everyone saw the Ottoman state as illegitimate and defunct—even among the Christian peasantry—nor were they ready to throw in their lot with one of the nascent national causes despite all the hardships they endured under the current situation. More importantly, not all state-seeking agents were nationalists in favor of an ethnically exclusive state, which, in fact makes a lot of sense given the demographic material they were working with.³⁹ Second, this revision would allow us to factor in the questions of popular politics and mass mobilization, which should accompany any discussion of nationalism. I argue that we need to look at violence (physical and symbolic) as a force in its own right rather than an outcome of the conflict on the ground, in order to understand how the mechanics of mass mobilization worked in Ottoman Macedonia. This requires that we understand the dynamics of violence, which, in turn, cannot be accomplished if we keep our eye on the state and the macronarrative and neglect the society and the

micronarrative. Instead, these two currents should complement each other. Finally, such an approach would help us move the historiography of ethnicity and nationhood in the Balkans away from formulaic repetitions of Balkan exceptionalism into the mainstream of scholarly debates on empires and nations. There are no ghosts in the Balkans we need to exorcise—just the ongoing pains of nation-making.

NOTES

- 1 *The Other Balkan Wars: A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict* by George F. Kennan (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1993).
- 2 L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).
- 3 While a full bibliography would be too long to include here, the pioneering work of scholars such as Evangelia Balta, Elizabeth Zachariadou, Vera Moutafchieva, Nikolai Todorov, and Nicoara Belediceanu should be acknowledged.
- 4 See, for instance, R. Brubaker and D. Laitin, "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998), 423–452; Stathis Kalyvas, "The Ontology of 'Political Violence': Action and Identity in Civil Wars." *Perspectives on Politics* 1 (2003), 475–494.
- 5 For a comparative analysis, see James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *The American Political Science Review* 97 (2003), 75–90. V. P. Gagnon's work on Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s takes this assumption to task using one of the most notorious cases of ethnic war in recent history: *The Myth of Ethnic War* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004).
- 6 Benjamin Braude, "Foundation Myths of the Millet System," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, ed. Benjamin Braude et al., vol. 1 (New York and London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1982), 74. Braude's limitation of the use of the term "millet" in reference to non-Muslim confessional communities exclusively to the post-Tanzimat period has been criticized by Ursinus in "Millet," *EI2*, v. III, 61–64.
- 7 On early Ottoman rule in the Balkans, see Heath Lowry, *The Shaping of the Ottoman Balkans* (İstanbul: Bahçeşehir University Press, 2008), and Halil İnalcık, "Stefan Dusan'dan Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na," in *Fuad Köprülü Armağanı* (İstanbul: O. Yalçın Matbaası, 1953).

- 8 See Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- 9 Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire* (Los Angeles: California University Press, 2010).
- 10 More than half a century after the Tanzimat reforms, at the turn of the twentieth century, this “semantic discrimination” was still in effect, for instance, in postmortem reports compiled by the state’s physician after an incident in a village in Aegean Macedonia. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul, Turkey [Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, henceforth BOA] TFR.I.SL 96/9540.
- 11 Compare with Paolo Odorico, *Memoire d’un voix perdu: le cartulaire de la métropole de Serres, 17–19e siècles* (Paris: Editions de l’Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1994), and Johann Strauss, “Ottoman Rule Experienced and Remembered: Remarks on Some Local Greek Chronicles of the Tourkokratia,” in *The Ottomans and the Balkans*, ed. F. Adanır et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 193–221.
- 12 Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire Structure of Power* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 128–142.
- 13 Suraiya N. Faroqhi, “Introduction,” in *Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 3, *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–1839*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 9.
- 14 Demetrios Stamatopoulos, “Constantinople in the Peloponnese: The Case of the Dragoman of the Morea Georgios Wallerianos and Some Aspects of the Revolutionary Process,” in *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1760–1850*, ed. Antonis Anastasopoulos et al. (Rethymno: University of Crete, 2007), 150. See also, Athanasios Th. Fotopoulos, *Oi Kotzampasides tis Peloponnisou kata ti deuteri tourkokratia, 1715–1821* (Athens: Irodotos, 2005).
- 15 For a careful reconsideration of the Orlov Revolt with regard to the Greek national movement, see Dean Kostantaras, “Christian Elites of the Peloponnese and the Ottoman State, 1715–1821,” *European History Quarterly* 43 (2013), 315–346.
- 16 For a discussion of eighteenth century Ottoman Historiography, see the special issue of *Mediterranean Historical Review* 9 (2004).
- 17 Halil İnalcık, “Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980), 283–337; Ariel Salzmann, “An Ancien Regime Revisited: ‘Privatization’ and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire,” *Politics and Society* 21 (1993), 393–424.
- 18 Karen Barkey, *The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).
- 19 Fikret Adanır, “Semi-Autonomous Forces in the Balkans and Anatolia,” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 3, *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–*

- 1839, ed. Suraiya N. Faruqi (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 178.
- 20 Rossitsa Gradeva notes that the term “*kırcah eşkiyası*” appears in a document dated 1785, but soon the term seems to have been replaced by “*dağh eşkiyası*” in Ottoman parlance. In Bulgarian, however, the term *kırcah* was exclusively used to describe these disturbances (R. Gradeva, “Osman Pazvantoglu of Vidin: Between Old and New,” in *The Ottoman Balkans, 1750–1830*, ed. Fredrick Anscombe [Princeton: Marcus Wiener Publishers, 2006, 115]). The differences in terminology is also reflected in the two most significant works on the phenomenon in Bulgarian and Turkish: Vera Mutafchieva, *Kardjaliisko Vreme* (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1977), and Yücel Özkaya, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Dağh İsyanları, 1791–1808* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Yayınları, 1983).
 - 21 A concise review of Pasvanoğlu Osman Paşa’s activities which brought him renown and respect can be found in Robert Zens, “Pasvanoglu Osman Pasa and the Pasalik of Belgrad.” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 8 (2002), 89–104.
 - 22 Yücel Özkaya, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Dağh İsyanları*, 57.
 - 23 Robert Zens, “Pasvanoglu Osman.”
 - 24 Apostolos Daskalakis, “Thourios Hymnos, le chant de la liberté de Rhigas Velestinlis.” *Balkan Studies* 4 (1963), 315–346, quoted in Rossitsa Gradeva, “Osman Pazvantoglu,” 136–137.
 - 25 Unlike Osman Paşa’s dealings with Velestinlis, which are relatively well documented, these last two should partly be attributed to legend (see Gradeva, “Osman Pazvantoglu,” 116).
 - 26 K. E. Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha’s Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).
 - 27 See the volume edited by Petros Pizantias for a collection of recent approaches: *The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2011).
 - 28 Christine Philliou, “Communities on the Verge: Unraveling the Phanariote Ascendancy in Ottoman Governance.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (2009), 151–181.
 - 29 Milen Petrov, “Everyday Forms of Compliance: Subaltern Commentaries on Ottoman Reform.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46 (2004), 730–759.
 - 30 Milen Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Paşa and the Vilayet of Danube” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2006).
 - 31 Milen Petrov, “Everyday Forms of Compliance,” 733.
 - 32 The Patriarchate initially recognized the Exarchate as an autocephalous church. Relations between the two Churches soured quickly, however, and despite the desperate efforts of the Russian Ambassador at Istanbul

to mend the rift, the Schism that started in 1872 remained in effect until 1945.

- 33 Abbott, *Tale of a Tour in Macedonia* (London: Edward Arnold, 1903), 104. Similar questions about the linguistic capabilities of teachers appointed by the Exarchate were also current. See Alexandar Trajanovski, "l'Activité Politico-Educatrice de l'Exarchat en Macédoine dans les Premières Années avant et après la fondation de l'Organisation Revolutionnaire Macedo-Adrinienne Secrete." *Macedonian Review* (1981), 191.
- 34 [Archives of the Foreign Ministry, Greece] AYE, φακ. 1883, Consul Dokos to President of the Society for the Dissemination of Greek Letters, Monastir, April 1883, in Sophia Vouri, *Pēges gia tēn Istoria tēs Makedonias: Politikē kai Ekpaideusē* (Athens: Paraskinio, 1994), 48–59.
- 35 BOA, TFR.I.SL 9/838, *Kaymakamlık* of Nevrekop to the *Mutasarrıflık* of Serres, 15 April 1903; Selanik *Vilâyeti* to the Inspectorate, 18 April 1903. For more on the gradual displacement of coexistence strategies and escalation of violence, see İpek Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).
- 36 See, for instance, Natalie Z. Davis, "The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France." *Past and Present* 59 (1973), 85. Several studies following the "culturalist approaches" to ethnic and nationalist violence place the process of dehumanization at the center of their analyses, and they consider the "cultural construction of fear" a necessary part of it—for a discussion and an introductory bibliography, see Rogers Brubaker and David D. Laitin, "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence." *Annual Review of Sociology* (1998), 423–452.
- 37 See, for instance, Sudhir Kakar, *The Colors of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion and Conflict* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- 38 Charles Tilly, *Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 21.
- 39 Keith Brown innovatively and convincingly challenges such presumptions in *Loyal Unto Death: Trust and Terror in Revolutionary Macedonia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

CHAPTER 3

Patriotic Publics: Rethinking Empire, Nationality, and the Popular Press in Ottoman and Habsburg Bosnia

Edin Hajdarpasic

In explaining the rise of nationalism, scholars have long stressed the growth of literacy and communication infrastructures as crucial conditions for the formation of national sentiments. As Benedict Anderson famously argued, the print media—newspapers in particular—were an indispensable factor in fostering new “imagined communities” across the world, from Latin America to the Middle East and Eastern Europe. The nation and the newspaper, then, appear inextricably linked; both appealed to new publics that accessed shared materials usually in the same vernacular languages.¹ Moreover, in Jürgen Habermas’s influential account, the emergence of such reading audiences was a part of larger structural transformations that gave rise to “the public sphere” as a dynamic social domain where public opinion is formed, debated, and contested. In that sense, “in large parts of southern and eastern Europe in the later nineteenth century ... the emergence of nationality (that is, the growth of a public for nationalist discourse) was simultaneously the emergence of a public sphere.”²

One conspicuous aspect of the transformation of public political life in the nineteenth-century Balkans, however, has been surprisingly little analyzed. In many parts of the Balkans before 1878, it was not the national movements, but rather the Ottoman imperial government that established the local printing presses, published the local newspapers, and policed the local political expressions. While Istanbul and Izmir had official and private publishing houses since the seventeenth

century, provincial Balkan cities like Ruse, Prizren, and Sarajevo saw the arrival of the first printing presses only under the sponsorship of the Ottoman government after the proclamation of the Tanzimat reforms. Starting in the 1860s, a slate of new and often multilingual regional newspapers were established across the Ottoman Empire. The *Dunav/Tuna* paper in the Danubian port of Ruse, for example, appeared in Bulgarian and Turkish; the new Edirne newspaper published in Greek, Turkish, and Bulgarian while its Thessaloniki counterpart also used Ladino; Serbian and Turkish were the languages of the Prizren gazette by 1871.³ In Bosnia, a number of publications in four alphabets (Cyrillic, Arabic, Latin, and Hebrew) were published by the Ottoman printing press in Sarajevo starting in 1866. After Austria-Hungary took over the administration of the province in 1878, many of the former officials and editors of Ottoman newspapers established new public profiles and new publications under Habsburg rule (1878–1914).

If newspaper- and nation-making have historically gone hand in hand, where do the dynamics of empire fit into this picture? What kinds of “publics” did different imperial media envision and foster? What can we gain by studying these provincial and imperial print cultures of the late-nineteenth-century Balkans? In pursuing these questions, my aim is not to pose or affirm some underlying contrast between the “national” and the “imperial” politics (often read as “ethnic” and “supraethnic,” respectively). To the contrary, it is to put the national/imperial distinctions under historical scrutiny, analyzing how the provincial print cultures emerging under Ottoman and Habsburg rules in Bosnia engaged with new publics and new political forces of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (from the 1860s to the 1900s). A number of recent works, such as Sarah Stein’s excellent study of the Ladino and Yiddish press in the Ottoman and Russian Empires, have explored similar questions relating to imperial and (trans)national public spheres.⁴ In the following pages, I aim to show how a variety of local as well as imperial political initiatives—so often perceived as (and at the time accused of) being “anational” or “anti-national”—were in fact deeply concerned with problems of “patriotism” as they worked to develop new print cultures. A critical analysis of an array of “patriotic publics,” I argue, has the potential to reopen questions about the historical formation of disparate public spheres and the print media through which they were constituted. Like

several other contribution to this volume—particularly those of İpek K. Yosmaoğlu and Theodora Dragostinova—my approach explores the work of ethnographers, intellectuals, journalists, and other actors whose manifold activities constituted the practical work of nation-building in the Balkans. Exploring and emphasizing the wide range of patriotic discourses in the modern Balkans underscores what Theodora Dragostinova calls the widespread fluency in “speaking national,” that is, the capacity to invoke patriotic and nation-based rhetorics for a variety of everyday as well as official purposes.⁵

Necessary for Progress? Appearance of Print Media in Bosnia-Herzegovina

In its very first issue—16 May 1866—the Ottoman newspaper *Bosna* printed a lengthy programmatic statement as well as three tributes celebrating the inauguration of the publication made possible by the first printing press established in Sarajevo. The mission statement in part read: “The [Ottoman] provincial government wants ... to help educate the people in the knowledge necessary for progress.... The aim of this newspaper is to educate the people, to direct it toward progress, and to advise it in their civic duties.... [It is hoped] that the Bosnian people will be informed and led in making progress by its newspapers,... [whose] light may not be well seen at first, but whose results will be experienced later.”⁶

Many Serbian and Croatian weeklies in the neighboring regions registered the appearance of *Bosna*, mocking the profuse praises to Sultan Abdülmecid, “who delights and makes joyous his subjects.” Four years later, after the Ottoman printing press brought out a number of titles for a variety of audiences, the prominent Serbian scholar Stojan Novaković claimed that it was “before their death [that] the Bosnian Turks, those unjust elders of the people of those regions, remembered to become permissive in a way”; they were “helping schools,” “printing some textbooks,” and “publishing Turcoman newspapers on red and yellow paper.” What Novaković found most offensive was that all this was done by “the Turks, the most eternal enemies of the Serbs,” who were only trying to deceive the people by giving them textbooks containing nothing “that I think that today’s child should learn,” which,

according to the Serbian scholar, would be issues like: “What is nationality, what is Serbian unity, what is pride and heroism of one’s own people, what is nationality and its expanses?!”⁷

The nationalist doubts about Ottoman reforms were not new. When the Porte first announced its reforms in 1839, *Danica Ilirska* published in Croatia voiced skepticism that the Ottomans could do much good for the inhabitants of Bosnia because “that curious Muhammedan,” Sultan Mahmud II, was unsuccessfully trying “to introduce some European customs into his empire, so as to fuse his subjects of European blood with the Asiatic Turks.”⁸ In almost forty years of evolving imperial policies in this Balkan province (1839–1878), the nationalist objections to these processes repeatedly protested what they saw as insincere, empty words of “the Turks” meant to deceive the European public and the local populace while the old yoke pressed ever harder. Reacting to the appearance of the Ottoman Bosnian newspaper *Bosanski vjestnik*, the Serbian *Zastava* commented: “With this newspaper, [the Ottoman Bosnian government] wants to wipe out our nationality [*narodnost*], so instead of Serbian language, they write ‘Bosnian’ language and ‘Bosnian’ people.... Now they want to destroy our nationality, our holiness, the light of our life, our pride and joy.”⁹

Thus from the outset, the appearance of the print media in Bosnia was an issue highly charged with arguments over the proper place of newspapers in “national” life. Among these contentious debates, the demand for vernacular language publications was one of the most consistent aspirations voiced by a variety of figures. The early Illyrian activists of the 1840s, mostly consisting of young Bosnian Franciscans who studied in the Habsburg Monarchy, appealed for the establishment of the printing press as an indispensable tool for the rise of learned societies, theaters, and museums in Ottoman Bosnia. Though friar Ivan Franjo Jukić published an important Bosnian publication in Zagreb in 1850–1852 (*Bosanski prijatelj*), no provincial institution ventured into printing until 1866 despite the continuing demands for such facilities. While there were several attempts to bring typographic machinery to Sarajevo throughout the 1850s, the reservations of the Ottoman government toward such enterprises thwarted these early attempts.¹⁰ Finally, in 1865 the Tanzimat reformers in Istanbul provided the resources necessary for the gathering of the newspaper editorial teams across different Ottoman provinces, including Bosnia. Ignaz Soppron,

a printer from Vojvodina, was paid to transport his machinery from Zemun to the Bosnian capital, acquire a number of additional scripts for the press (namely Ottoman, Church Slavonic, and Hebrew in addition to the reformed Cyrillic), and put this equipment at the disposal of the provincial government.¹¹

At first much of the work was done by a handful of officials who supplied Sopron with information for formal government publication, but a host of local figures very quickly took over and charted a new course for the printing press. Mehmed Šaćir Kurtčehajić, Bogoljub Petranović, and Jozef Alkalaj also distinguished themselves by their contributions. Miloš Mandić, a native of Bihać whose own schooling took him to Slavonia and Belgrade, became an enterprising editor who successfully elicited contributions from other Bosnian teachers, priests, doctors, and government officials. In fact, it was the growing demand for non-governmental discussions that led to the establishment in 1869 of a “non-official” newspaper called *Sarajevski cvjetnik* or *Gülşen-i Saray* (meaning *The Flower-Garden of Sarajevo*).¹² Both official and non-official publications, printed in the same facilities in Sarajevo, were subject to internal review and censorship of the editorial board of the provincial printing press.¹³

These Sarajevo-based weekly publications were published in the Ottoman and the “Bosnian” or “Serbian” language, thus instituting a bilingual publishing practice. The Sarajevan editors settled the matter of vernacular use, extremely important in reaching out to the intended audiences across Bosnia and “subscribers in Austria and Serbia,” by adopting Vuk Karadžić’s linguistic standard that was codified and elaborated in Vienna, Zagreb, and Belgrade in the previous decades. In other words, the language of South Slavic unity, which was to serve as the common platform for the Serbo-Croatian national struggle against “the Turks and the Austrians,” was also the language of imperial reform in Ottoman Bosnia.¹⁴

“Representing and Improving the Thinking of the People”

It is important to note that the very appearance of such a thing as a *local newspaper* was taken as a momentous sign of “progress” by those who funded and disseminated these artifacts. Indeed, the mission

statement of the first issue of *Bosna* (1866) hailed its own arrival on the public stage as a “necessary step” in helping the inhabitants of Ottoman Bosnia “achieve progress,” especially in terms of their “civic duties,” “education,” and “science” (*nauka*).¹⁵ Three years later, the first issue of *Sarajevski cvjetnik* called out to “all the provincial newspapers,” urging them to seize their unique “role in our society” and help illuminate paths to “education,” “progress,” and “good governance and laws ... that apply equally to the rich and the poor, for the strong and the weak.”¹⁶ In 1876, when another Ottoman-Bosnian paper called *Neretva* appeared in Mostar, it explicated its role even more emphatically: “It is generally well-known that newspapers are the organ that represents and improves the thinking of the people [*narod*] and of vast humankind, that disseminates good things all around. Since ... [newspapers] improve and advance the material and mental state of things everywhere, so it will be in Herzegovina itself with the establishment and dissemination of this lofty and decisive thing.”¹⁷

The telling emphasis on the dual goal—“representing and improving the thinking of the people”—brings to light the key underlying aims that shaped the efforts of the Ottoman Bosnian press since the 1860s. In a way, newspapers and a growing number of publications would try to (re)present Ottoman Bosnia to its own inhabitants; they featured many educational articles about Bosnia’s history, its geography, its laws, its internal politics, its standing in international affairs, and about the idealized image of harmonious life of its four main confessional constituencies, Orthodox, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims.¹⁸ Articles in *Sarajevski cvjetnik* followed with special interest the last set of concerns revolving around, as an 1870 piece put it, “the need to live and work together on educational enlightenment, setting our sights on our mutual love of the four confessions of [Bosnia’s] inhabitants.”¹⁹ It is important to note here how the task of “representing” the province entailed a twofold “improvement” of public opinion. On the one hand, there is the obvious attempt to cast Ottoman Bosnia, particularly the treatment of Christians under Ottoman rule, in a flattering light, one that would help refute many of the charges of Ottoman oppression and enhance the image of Ottoman rule. These polemical replies, however, were explicitly aimed at international audiences and the foreign critics of Ottoman rule in Bosnia; substantially different exhortations were directed toward the inhabitants of the province. Addressing this public,

the publishers of the Ottoman newspapers sent a message of a different kind of “patriotic improvement,” one that stressed the need for a more stringent effort to cast off “the old customs” and to work hard toward educational uplift in the province.

This latter approach to “improvement”—one that entailed a struggle against “superstitious delusions” and for educational and social “progress”—was one of the key senses of reform that Ottoman Bosnian writers pursued in their intellectual and political undertakings. “To obtain knowledge,” Mehmed Hulusi (1843–1907), the editor of *Neretva*, explained in 1876, “a teacher is needed; likewise, to learn crafts and agriculture, one needs masters and factories that are connected to capital and wealth.” The state-sponsored Ottoman newspapers, he claimed, could do the same for the people of the imperial provinces, but their mission was hampered by “material poverty” of the people and by “the love for old tools and customs, which are the reasons why we lag behind.”²⁰ Such advocacy of society-wide improvements was a common theme among other Ottoman newspapers of the 1860s and the 1870s, with the Istanbul-based *Terakki* (established in 1869) claiming *Progress* as its very name. The editors of these publications often reprinted and critiqued each other’s articles, but consistently emphasized that their broadsides were not partisan polemics, but parts of a self-proclaimed mission of “enlightenment” aimed at revitalizing and “invigorating” the Ottoman state.²¹

No one championed this agenda of provincial “enlightenment” with more enthusiasm than Mehmed Šaćir Kurtčehajić (1844–1872). An energetic official and scholar living in Sarajevo, Kurtčehajić yearned to gain a better grasp of “Western learning,” particularly of French language and literature, but these ambitions, he once complained, could not be met by his schooling in provincial Ottoman towns.²² Though feeling constrained by these circumstances, Kurtčehajić nonetheless demonstrated impressive political skills, becoming a member of the Sarajevo district council at a surprisingly young age and the head editor of *Sarajevski cvjetnik* in 1869.²³ In the latter task, he showed great interest in following Ottoman, South Slavic, and Western European news and literature. The newspaper managed to cover a surprisingly wide variety of topics (one unsigned piece even drew a comparison between the reforms in Japan and the reforms in the Ottoman Empire), but Kurtčehajić’s own writings repeatedly stressed themes of education,

unfounded beliefs, history, backwardness, and, above all, the need for “progress” (*napredak*).²⁴

This broad agenda contained a number of specific concerns with the conditions necessary for the improvement of many Ottoman economic and political institutions. “Our advancement in a material sense ... depends also on the advancement of field, agricultural economy,” Kurtčehajić wrote in 1869 in a first of several articles that dispensed advice on how economic productivity of Bosnia could be enhanced and how new technologies—railways, roads, harvesting machines, telegraph lines—could be expanded and implemented in the province.²⁵ The cultivation of practical skills among the youth was an integral part of this program and was especially evident in the efforts to establish a variety of educational institutions, from schools for destitute children to academies for new teachers.²⁶

Other approaches focused on defining the reform agenda against a background of “prejudice” and “ignorance” that slowed the pace of the new developments. In the first year of *Sarajevski cvjetnik*, Kurtčehajić wrote a notable series of articles on “Superstition,” which tried to demonstrate the following:

The inhabitants [of Bosnia] are marked among other peoples ... by natural reason that cannot be denied.... But over time, the people came to have some delusions, in which many men, especially peasants, and all women are deeply mired. No one should think that we are here trying to rebuke the people or to ridicule it, but one should be convinced that here we want to prove just how harmful the delusions and superstitions are ... and to show that those who seek cure in such things often find poison in them.²⁷

This passage and the subsequent texts on the same theme revealed the gendered aspects of this program of improvement that addressed specifically male audiences presumed to be not “mired in superstitions” and therefore potentially receptive to these exhortations. Kurtčehajić listed various “superstitions,” rebuking “the people” for trying to cure illnesses through “ineffective” home remedies and rituals instead of “trying to go

to the doctor and telling him what's wrong." The serialized editorials repeatedly urged "those whose heart is committed to the happiness of the people" to pursue edification through schools, learned societies, and other hallmark institutions of education.²⁸

A dose of "patriotism," which was necessary "for the revitalization and strengthening of our state," accompanied this Ottoman mission of provincial revival.²⁹ While the influence of nationalist rhetoric may be evident in the invocations of duties toward the Ottoman "homeland," the kind of "patriotism" promoted by the Ottoman Bosnian publications nonetheless differed substantially from the Serbian-sponsored "awakening" of the 1860s, which stressed "consciousness of nationality" as a prerequisite for the rise of an armed national liberation struggle. The Ottoman Bosnian patriots like Kurtčehajić, on the other hand, placed less emphasis on the notion of "consciousness" and obviously had no comparable "liberatory" ambitions (in fact, they were holding on to power against such movements). Nonetheless, some common idioms, appeals, and political commitments resonated across contemporaneous national and imperial movements despite their clear opposition to one another. Though the Ottoman state would embark after 1876 on a much larger and more systematic project of promoting "Ottomanism" among its citizens, the notion of "patriotism" among Bosnian intellectuals of the 1860s bore a distinctly provincial stamp that singled out Bosnia and its "special" standing, history, and sense of peoplehood or "nationality" (*narodnost*) as elements that bound its diverse inhabitants together.

The first issues of *Bosanski vjestnik* in 1866 called attention to the provinces' particular position in the empire, asserting (without offering much detail) that Bosnia "kept its historical right throughout all changes of time, and its ancient nationality [*narodnost*] here survived the storms of the past. The Bosnian people expresses its *narodnost* fully ... and it has remained unharmed by differentiation of confession."³⁰ In a related vein, *Sarajevski cvjetnik* carried in 1871 a curious notice "from Istanbul" addressed to "the Bosnian brothers": "You live in a province that is encircled by foreign borders, and you are therefore the real guardians of European Turkey; you have attained dignity that no one can deny to you.... You were praised in the imperial military decree with the words: my 'Bosnian people, brave and loyal.' Thus his highness, the sultan, looks upon you as his moral sons."³¹

Articles on Ottoman Bosnian history, geography, and politics began to appear in support of this novel Ottoman contention, while Kurtčehajić linked these expressions to “civic duties toward the imperial government” in an 1870 editorial simply called “Patriotism” (*Patriotizam*):

This blessed word, which passed across the lips of all citizens with a certain satisfaction, is not just, as some believe, love toward the land and people ... but is also the sentiment by which every individual subordinates his private interests to the general state interests and bears every sacrifice to the general needs.... The biggest mistake would be to consider oneself a patriot because of [one’s] struggles and sacrifices to some political party ... disconnected from the general state laws and structures. ... We should liberate ourselves from old prejudices; lend each other a hand like brothers without considering who is of what confession; ... and make the effort for everything that will serve the progress, wealth, and honor of the empire—if we want to be rightly called patriots, thus giving an example of reverence for the homeland and brotherly love to our descendants.³²

The kind of “patriotism” being advanced here, then, appeared to be mostly concerned with the achievement of “progress” as reflected in the political and educational initiatives undertaken by the Ottoman Bosnian government. In fact, several other newspaper pieces signed “A Patriot” (*Jedan patriot*) were not exhortations urging imperial pride, but were actually criticisms aimed at the Ottoman officials. Several such “patriotic” editorials, for example, blamed Ottoman authorities for their slow pace in building the planned railway lines, in improving the bad condition of the Bosnian roads, in opening new schools, and in removing key bureaucratic restrictions in political affairs.³³ On the other hand, local contributions to the opening of new schools, such as the *rüşdiye* in Foča in 1870, were greeted with praise: “Patriotism and enthusiasm for the people’s well-being is thus shown! These financial contributions of yours ... will be remembered by your descendants.”³⁴ In this sense, to be this kind of “patriot” in Ottoman Bosnia meant advocating comprehensive reform of the provincial institutions while also criticizing both “the officials” and “the people” whenever passion for this sweeping project was found to be lacking.

Schools, education, and the general spread of “knowledge” (along with the accompanying abandonment of “delusions” and “old customs”) continued to be cited as benchmarks by which reform was assessed, but this largely educational agenda also amplified the concurrent understanding of reform as improvement for Bosnian *Christians* within a revitalized Ottoman structure. In this regard, the Ottoman government not only aided the project of the construction of new churches, but also printed textbooks for the growing number of Orthodox and Catholic schools in Bosnia.³⁵ In fact, the very first books published by the Ottoman Bosnian press were introductory teaching materials about the Gospel and other fundamentals of the Christian faith (both Orthodox and Catholic). As one might expect, many of these works were prefaced with profuse praises for “the most high sultan Abdülmecid ... whose name is mentioned every day in gratitude in churches and especially schools,” but their content suggested a number of different national inflections and lessons about geography, folklore, and history within this imperial framework.³⁶ In phrases resembling the pan-Slavic rhetoric of the nineteenth century, an 1871 Ottoman geography textbook “for Catholic classrooms” emphasized that “the largest people in Europe are the Slavs, who number over eighty million souls ... and are divided into five [sic] proud branches, Serbs, Croats, Russians, Bulgarians, Poles, and Czechs,” further characterizing “their lands” as “illustrious and prosperous.”³⁷ The expanding Franciscan and Orthodox schools were frequently visited by Ottoman officials, with governors publicly attending ceremonies that regularly mentioned the “progress in education of all our citizens, regardless of class or religion.”³⁸

“Folk poetry” was singled out as a particularly valuable asset of the Ottoman “homeland” and, thanks to the efforts of Bogoljub Petranović (the head teacher at Sarajevo’s Orthodox secondary school), published in Sarajevo as a separate volume that complemented the “Muhammedan” and “Serbian” folklore collections that already appeared in the local newspapers.³⁹ Such accomplishments were also positively noted by the *Bosnian-Serbian Calendar* for the year 1869.⁴⁰ As long as such Serbian, Croatian, or other vaguely national claims on cultural artifacts and qualities remained within the imperial realm, the Ottoman government seemed content to feature and incorporate them into its evolving reform program.

Some of the strongest Ottoman Bosnian statements about the meaning of these reforms were delivered as polemical replies to the Serbian and Croatian magazines published outside of Bosnia that consistently attacked the Ottoman officials for oppressing and sowing disunity among their “brothers groaning under the Turkish yoke.” Judging from the amount of commentary, it seems that many national activists in Zagreb, Novi Sad, and Belgrade closely followed the Ottoman publications coming out of Sarajevo and wrote many articles seeking to expose the Ottoman reforms as, in the words of one Belgrade newspaper, “pro forma” gestures that hid the “ongoing Turkish tyranny” and kept the province in a “state of despair.”⁴¹ Kurtčehajić made it his task not only to refute such charges by publishing lengthy reports of “progress” and “enlightenment” in Bosnia, but also to turn the tables on the nationalist critics and their own self-proclaimed mission of upholding freedom and equality for all peoples. In a text characteristic of such efforts, Kurtčehajić set out the following justifications for Bosnia’s precarious position during the Tanzimat:

If the Sublime Porte has been somewhat late in this century with its reforms, and could not immediately grant everything to the extent that the Western powers could, there were causes for that [delay]. But now we believe there will be few, excepting Serbia, who will venture to protest that the Ottoman government is unjust toward its peoples. Do not all confessions and nationalities enjoy equal rights? Are not Christians free to build churches for themselves, just as the Turks build mosques and the Jews synagogues? Are there too few officials in the lower and higher [governmental] services who are of Christian confession? Are Christian children forbidden anywhere from going to schools, and are they not gladly received there?... Do Christians not have estates and goods all over Turkey just as other peoples do?⁴²

The link between the reforms and the improving status of the Ottoman Christians, explicitly foregrounded in the above plea, appeared to be fleshed out by reports about more newly opened churches and new Christian officials, but the persistent questioning of this mission—from both within and outside of Ottoman Bosnia—revealed a great deal of

anxiety about this project, its underlying assumptions, and its “late” timing that was further exasperated by the “slow” pace of improvement. “The people are able and the government desires it, yet still we do not progress,” despaired Kurtčehajić in 1870, blaming the stagnating situation once again on the persistence of “old beliefs, ... prejudices, superstitions,” and the lack of “educated” engagements with the evident “discord on so many political issues,” implicitly referencing the confessional tensions that accompanied the changes in the legal and social status of Bosnian Christians.⁴³

On few occasions, the Ottoman newspapers openly discussed the Muslim abuses of Bosnian Christians, but tended to treat them as “exceptions” that marred the usual peace and order. For instance, an 1869 report from Krupa identified a certain *hafiz* Selimanović as the instigator of violence and invectives against the local Christians and the Ottoman officials. Kurtčehajić tried to portray these acts as shameful anomalies that called for a more stringent implementation of the “legal freedoms that everyone should enjoy,” but it was clear from his own reports that the attainment of these changes remained a distant goal, one that could be achieved only through long, arduous, and uncertain political work.⁴⁴ Indeed, such disturbing doubts and misgivings about the actual situation in Ottoman Bosnia had to be repressed in polemical exchanges where Kurtčehajić asserted “reforms” as already accomplished results that were then favorably compared with the restrictive nationalist programs in Serbia and Croatia.⁴⁵

The eruption of the 1875 peasant uprising in Herzegovina and its quick spread throughout Bosnia spelled an end to this Ottoman program of “patriotism” and “progress.” The peasant–landlord tensions, routinely downplayed in the pages of the Ottoman Bosnian press, were impossible to disguise as mere “obstacles to reform” in the face of the massive revolts, conflicts, atrocities, and crises that shook the Balkans from 1875 to 1878. Amid this regional violence and sweeping changes taking place in Istanbul, most of the provincial newspapers stopped appearing in those decisive years. Finally, after the Congress of Berlin formally ended Ottoman rule in Bosnia and handed the administration of the province to Austria-Hungary in 1878, the bilingual provincial publication, *Bosna*, ceased publication after a thirteen-year run.

“Modern Letters”: Literature and Homeland in Habsburg Bosnia

New publication trends soon emerged under Habsburg rule, sometimes building on the Ottoman precedents, oftentimes blazing entirely novel paths. Austro-Hungarian administration took the print media in the newly acquired province as a serious matter, one worth vigilant supervision and careful management. In the first years of the occupation (1878–1882), the Habsburg government sent to the province hundreds of administrators who began to compile and publish news, statistics, laws, and other formal announcements in official publications like *Bosansko-hercegovačke novine* and *Sarajevski list*.⁴⁶

Outside of these formal mouthpieces, however, it was mostly literary publications that began to appear and thrive after the mid-1880s. Under the policies laid down by minister Benjamin von Kallay (for twenty years the chief Habsburg authority in Bosnia, 1882–1903), signs of political agitation were to be carefully monitored and if possible prevented; consequently, receiving approval for independent newspapers devoted to critical discussion of local politics proved to be difficult. However, literary, religious, and other “cultural” affairs were less constrained by censorship and administrative policies, which allowed these domains to acquire a new political charge in the Habsburg period. For instance, *Bosanska vila*, the “Journal for Entertainment, Education, and Literature” (1884–1914), established itself as a publication representing Bosnian Serbian interests; likewise, *Behar*, the “Journal for Education and Entertainment” (1900–1911), was from its outset a forum for discussion of Bosnian Muslim politics.⁴⁷ This cultural/political dynamic of competing national societies, clubs, and publications is familiar to students of Central European and Balkan histories where the print media were precisely the vehicles for the development of new *national* public spheres (in this case Serbian, Muslim/Bosniac, and Croatian).⁴⁸

What is remarkable about the context of Ottoman and Habsburg Bosnia is the appropriation of these emerging public venues for “patriotic” engagements distinct from the already established and well-known national movements. Put differently, there are several distinct strands of popular publications that do not fit well into the framework

dominated by Bosnia's national constituencies and their corresponding histories; here I will outline only three areas worthy of further critical scrutiny: (1) the continuing uses of Ottoman Turkish and Arabic in Bosnian print; (2) historical preservation as a local patriotic medium; and (3) the relationship between literature and properly "national" cultural life.

In the first place, there is the enduring legacy of the Ottoman-Bosnian press, evident in the work of intellectuals like Mehmed Hulusi, the former Ottoman official who edited *Vatan* (1884–1897) and *Rehber* (1897–1902) in Sarajevo under Austro-Hungarian rule.⁴⁹ Like the first Ottoman Bosnian periodicals, these journals continued to use Ottoman Turkish as a language of the print media during the Habsburg period alongside the more prominent Serbo-Croatian dialects in Latin or Cyrillic alphabets. Moreover, the choice of the Arabic script, whether to write Ottoman Turkish or Serbo-Croatian in the *aljamiado* manner, became a significant issue in Bosnian Muslim politics, one that had major implications for understandings of literacy and for engaging different audiences. Indeed, when the first issue of *Vatan* (meaning *Home-land*) was announced in 1884, an official note in *Sarajevski list* commented that Ottoman Turkish print was to be used in "this newspaper as an appropriate medium for the spread of enlightenment because many native Muhammedans do not know how to read modern letters." The note added that *Vatan* announcements "had been printed with the old Turkish letters of the [Ottoman] provincial printing press."⁵⁰ Though in subsequent decades Muslim publications like *Bošnjak*, *Gajret*, and *Behar* would all adopt Bosnian dialects in Cyrillic or Latin scripts, the use of Arabic remained a charged topic that educational-religious publications like *Muallim* would continue to debate into the 1910s.⁵¹ These issues, even when sketched here only briefly, suggest complex relationships between literacy, print media, and notions of patriotism that do not easily fit into the usual narratives of nation-formation in modern Bosnia. (They also help illuminate the evolution of specifically Bosnian Muslim, or Bosniac, national identities that emerged over the course of the twentieth century, which are explored in essays by Brenna Miller and Victor A. Friedman in this volume.)

Secondly, if the 1884 comment about *Vatan* posited an underlying difference between "modern letters" and "old Turkish" ways, the pages of this and other publications sought precisely to showcase

the *modern* qualities of the Bosnian “homeland.” Alongside pages of poetry, prose, and literary criticism, *Vatan* itself carried many notes on the proud and increasingly “scientific”—archaeological, ethnological, historical—preservation of cultural heritage of Bosnia since antiquity, especially emphasizing the importance of the newly opened Provincial Museum in Sarajevo (Landesmuseum or Zemaljski muzej).⁵² The museum itself (founded in 1884 and publishing its flagship journal, *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja* from 1889 to the present) became by 1900 a key institution that issued antiquarian yet patriotic-sounding appeals to various Bosnian publics. As one article characteristically put it:

Our homeland Herceg-Bosnia hides many antiquities.... But ruin has befallen our antiquities, from which we and our ancestors can recognize ourselves.... Thus let us get to work! We now have a treasury in which we can preserve ... our native valuables and advance them into the infinite future, which is why we have our museum in Sarajevo, and our newspapers.... [Then] let us write down from the grandfather, the grandmother, the father, the uncle, the mother, the aunt—that story: about the castle, the city, the church, the chapel, the mosque, the graveyards, the battlefields, etc.... Let us go and dig out those old stones.... Let us record this inscription.... Here is work for a worthy custodian of our dear proud Herceg-Bosnia!⁵³

Its first volumes carried many notes on local monuments, engravings, documents, customs, and curiosities. Archaeological excavations in particular offered prominent public displays even in countryside districts where scientists like Carl Patsch hoped they would “arouse local patriotism, thus inciting interest for the benefit of provincial history.”⁵⁴

In addition to these venues, popular literature—understood here as the world of the belles lettres in newspapers and periodicals—also attracted much attention as a medium that could change public sensibilities in Habsburg Bosnia. In fact, like the appearance of first newspapers in Bosnia, the development of the first literary publications was already charged as an implicitly “national” domain in which literature was supposed to reflect, develop, or advance the “national spirit.” Thus when literary critic Henrik Glück reviewed the state of journalism and literature in Habsburg Bosnia for a Yugoslav-oriented Croatian journal

in 1903, he deplored the lack of “good” newspapers and counseled that the province “needs first and foremost a nationally conscious and serious press, which would help [Bosnia] in its difficult political and economic troubles.” Glück particularly deplored the Habsburg government-sponsored literary journal *Nada* (1895–1903) for having too few “genuinely” Bosnian writers despite featuring large number of local contributors in poetry, prose, reviews, and fine arts.⁵⁵

Nada was indeed an unusual publication, established and promoted by the Austro-Hungarian administration as an elite cultural forum for the Bosnian province, but its pages were not filled with programmatic statements urging pride in the Bosnian, Habsburg, or some other kind of homeland. Instead, its preferred form of discussion were literary debates about the merits of past and contemporary belles lettres. Feuilletons on Ibsen and Tolstoy appeared alongside detailed reviews of literary production in central and southeastern European cities like Vienna, Zagreb, Prague, and Belgrade. Reflections like those of Ljudevit Dvorniković argued at length that the “cultural effect of belles lettres is not instructional but rather motivational; the work of the belles lettres is ... an expression of a demand” and is as such “psychological” rather than everyday political.⁵⁶ Works of poetry by young writers were found to be brimming with “patriotism, erotica, pure lyricism, even reflections and satire.”⁵⁷ Others still, like the writings of the young Bosnian Muslim intellectual Safvet Bašagić, were noted for their deft fusions of “flames of patriotic reflection” with expressions “overflowing with erotic effervescence.”⁵⁸ Literature understood in this way could certainly be (and indeed was) accused of not being “national” enough, yet it was also not without its own notions of fin de siècle patriotic sentiments.

Patriotic Publics

Because such articulations of patriotism, evident in the popular Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian press, were not prominent parts of the already established national movements (Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim ones in the Bosnian context), it can be tempting to designate them with a number of terms suggesting alternatives to the more familiar kinds of nationalism. One could recognize certain aspects of

these expressions as “imperial,” or “supranational,” or “regional,” or “local” patriotisms. Scholars can certainly find evidence of national indifference and ambiguity here. Indeed, each of these productive and valuable dimensions has come to light thanks to the work of scholars analyzing the intersections of empire and patriotism (for instance, Michelle Campos, Laurence Cole, and Daniel Unowsky), or the provincial forces that enabled alternative conceptions of multi- and transnational territory, loyalty, and identity (including the work of Hannes Grandits, Dominique Reill, and Jeremy King, among many others).⁵⁹

My analysis builds on these perspectives and findings while approaching the debates about provincial nation-making from another angle. Here my aim has not been to delineate and categorize alternatives to established nationalisms, but rather to explore how print cultures and the concurrent formations of public spheres—long seen as the hallmarks of the rise of nationalism—developed in imperial provinces like Bosnia-Herzegovina under Ottoman and Habsburg rules. While it is indisputably true that newspapers crucially enabled the spread of nationalism, the historical development of new publics around print media—including their patriotic programs—has been much more open and much more engaged with a very wide array of political interests, cultural influences, and social pressures. The “patriotic publics” emerging under the Ottoman and Habsburg rules in Bosnia certainly adopted styles and conventions from the discourses of nineteenth-century nationalism, extolling pride in one’s “nationality” (*narodnost*, *patriotizam*), love of one’s “homeland” (*domovina*, *vatan*), and so on. Yet in doing so, such engagements, often stemming from imperial, provincial, or local sources, resignified the meanings of “patriotism,” mobilizing them for different purposes: advocating a break with “the old customs and superstitions,” for example, or establishing new “scientific” institutions, or asserting literature as a force of “modern” life in a provincial society.

Thus the emerging nineteenth-century “patriotic” discourses, which may at first appear as clear indications of nation-building processes, could be better seen as adaptations of a particular form of public engagement, which can as such be appropriated and incorporated by a number of competing movements and political agendas. These historical dynamics matter because through them, we can understand the dissemination of print media and the development

of print cultures not as mere conditions for nation-making (in the modern Balkans and elsewhere), but rather as the dynamics of actually *public* spheres, containing explicitly national as well as imperial, profoundly local as well as transnational dimensions. Of course, this does not entail an idealization of publics as open, rational, or inclusive civil societies; these would be implausible generalizations in light of the obvious inequalities along gender, ethnic, and class lines that bounded and crisscrossed different domains. Such an approach does propose, however, a step toward understanding patriotic publics as social fields capable of absorbing many political aspirations without necessarily resolving the disparate, even contradictory, forces, demands, and interests within them.

NOTES

- 1 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
- 2 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Boston: MIT Press, 1991 [1962]); quotation from Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Culture: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Boston: MIT Press, 1992), 289–339.
- 3 Bülent Varlık, "Yerel Basının Öncüsü: Vilâyet Gazetleri," *Tanzimat'tan-Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: İletişim, 1985), 99–102; also Christoph Herzog, Raoul Motika, and Michael Ursinus, eds., *Querelles privées et contestations publiques: Le rôle de la presse dans la formation de l'opinion publique au Proche-Orient* (Istanbul: Isis, 2002).
- 4 See Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Palmira Brummett, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908–1911* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000); and the articles by Cengiz Kırılı and Elizabeth Frierson in A. Salvatore and D. F. Eickelman, eds., *Public Islam and the Common Good* (Leiden: Brill, 2004). On the Balkans specifically, see Alexander Vezhenkov, "Reconciliation of the Spirits and Fusion of the Interests: 'Ottomanism' as an Identity Politics," in *We, the People: Politics of National Peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*, ed. Diana Mishkova (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 47–78; and Holly Case, "The Media and State Power in South-East Europe up to 1945: A Comparative Study

- of Yugoslav, Romanian, and Bulgarian Media,” in *Ottomans into Europeans: State and Institution Building in South-East Europe*, ed. Wim van Meurs and Alina Mungiu-Pippidi (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).
- 5 Theodora Dragostinova, “Speaking National: Nationalizing the Greeks of Bulgaria, 1900–1939.” *Slavic Review* 67 (2008), 154–181.
 - 6 Anonymous, “Vilajetske vjesti,” *Bosna* 1 (16 May 1866), 1. For the sake of consistency with other citations, I have cited the content in Serbo-Croatian using the Julian calendar rather than the Hegira calendar; the same newspaper issues carried roughly the same text in Ottoman Turkish. I am also using the present-day names of places rather than the multiple different names for regions and towns.
 - 7 Stojan Novaković, “Književne prilike.” *Mlada Srbadija* 1 (1870), 91–93.
 - 8 Ljudevit Gaj, “Proglas.” *Danica Ilirska* 5 (1839), 185.
 - 9 Anonymous, “Dopis.” *Zastava* 24 (1866); also *Zastava* 126 (1870).
 - 10 Muhamed Hadžijahić, “Pokušaj osnivanja štamparije i novina u Sarajevu 1853. godine.” *Bibliotekarstvo* 10 (1964), 27–40; Todor Kruševac, *Bosansko-hercegovački listovi u XIX veku* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1978); Jozo Džambo, *Buchwesen in Bosnien und der Herzegowina (1800–1878): Zur Problem der Lesersozioologie* (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1985).
 - 11 Ignaz Soppron, *Monographie von Semlin und Umgebung* (Zemun: Soppron, 1890).
 - 12 Determining who authored certain articles in these papers (*Bosanski vjestnik*, *Bosna*, *Sarajevski cvjetnik* and *Neretva*) is very difficult as few pieces were individually signed (e.g., each issue was signed by the main editor without specifying the other writers). Moreover, archival documentation related to the Ottoman Bosnian printing press was destroyed in the bombardment of the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo in 1992.
 - 13 İpek Yosmaoğlu, “Chasing the Printed Word: Press Censorship in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1913.” *Turkish Studies Association Journal* 27 (2003), 15–49.
 - 14 The first bilingual Ottoman Bosnian publications, like the agrarian Sefer Law of 1859, used a prereform Serbian dialect. E.g., see “Kanunname—Uredba” (1859), no. 613, ZOP, Archive of Bosnia-Herzegovina (ABiH). In 1866, Ottoman Bosnian publications adopted Vuk Karadžić’s standard, several years before the media in Serbia did the same. For Ottoman laws printed in Serbo-Croatian, see manuscripts C-8772 or R-7665, Library of the National Museum of Bosnia-Herzegovina.
 - 15 “Vilajetske vjesti.” *Bosna* 1 (16 May 1866); “Znanje i obrazovanost.” *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 12 (10 June 1872).
 - 16 “Priposlato.” *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 46 (13 November 1869).
 - 17 Mehmed Hulusi, “Vilajetske vjesti.” *Neretva* 1 (19 February 1876).

- 18 "Poučne zabave." *Bosanski vjestnik* 22 (3 September 1866); Editorial, *Bosanski vjestnik* 23 (10 September 1866); "Poučno." *Bosna* 13–15 (April–May 1870).
- 19 Mehmed Šaćir Kurtčehajić, "Preporuke." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 25 (20 June 1870).
- 20 Hulusi, "Vilajetske vjesti." *Neretva* 1 (19 February 1876).
- 21 See from *Sarajevski cvjetnik*: "Vilajetske vjesti," 17 (24 April 1869); "Novinarstvo kod nas," 23 (5 June 1869); "Unutrašnje vjesti," 25 (20 June 1870); "O vilajetske novine!," 40 (3 October 1870); "Javna korešpondencija," 4 (23 January 1871).
- 22 See Kurtčehajić letter in Safvet Bašagić, *Bošnjaci i Hercegovci u islamskoj književnosti* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1986 [1912]), 204.
- 23 "Vilajetske vjesti," *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 45 (8 January 1872); "Unutrašnje vjesti," *Bosna* 12 (19 April 1870).
- 24 E.g., see "Različitosti" and "Inostrane vjesti" in *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 27 (4 July 1870); *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 16 (24 April 1871); *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 33 (16 October 1871); *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 36 (6 November 1871); *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 4 (25 March 1872); "Vilajetske vjesti," *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 36 (6 November 1871); "Našu staru želju opet izjavljujemo," *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 39 (27 November 1871).
- 25 "Materijalni napredak." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 14 (3 April 1869); in the same newspaper, see "Zemljodjelstvo." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 9 (27 February 1869); "Narodna privreda." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 13 (27 March 1869); "Što se ne posije neće roditi." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 20 (24 April 1869); "Unutrašnje vjesti." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 22 (29 May 1869); also "Vjesti." *Bosna* 130 (1868).
- 26 "Uloga javne radionice." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 37 (11 September 1869); *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 1, 18, 31 (January, May, August 1870); *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 19, 31 (May, October 1871).
- 27 "Sujevjerje." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 38 (18 September 1869).
- 28 Kurtčehajić, "Sujevjerje." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 28, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 (July–October 1869). Also "O obrazovanju." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 10 (6 March 1869).
- 29 Kurtčehajić, "Patriotizam." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 30 (25 July 1870).
- 30 "U Sarajevu." *Bosanski vjestnik* 1 (7 April 1866); also "Podlistak." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 6–8 (January–February 1869).
- 31 Anonymous [*Basiret*], "Primjedba." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 7 (13 February 1871); also "Domaće vjesti." *Bosanski vjestnik* 10 (11 June 1866).
- 32 Kurtčehajić, "Patriotizam." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 30 (25 July 1870).
- 33 See *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 14 (4 April 1870); *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 15 (11 April 1870); *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 17 (25 April 1870); *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 9 (29 April 1872); *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 14 (1 July 1872).

- 34 "Spisak." *Bosna* 222 (20 August 1870).
- 35 Despite featuring some of the first primers using the new Serbo-Croatian language standard, the Ottoman Bosnian textbooks were left out of Charles Jelavich's survey of pre-1914 South Slavic educational policies; *South Slav Nationalisms: Textbooks and Yugoslav Union before 1914* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990).
- 36 See *Naravoučenje o čoveku i njegovim dužnostima*, trans. Georgije Jovanović (1866); *Bukvar za osnovne škole u vilajetu bosanskom* (1867); [Miloš Mandić], *Kratka sveštena istorija za osnovne škole u vilajetu bosanskom* (1868) and *Prva čitanka za osnovne škole u vilajetu bosanskom* (1868); Jovan Džinić, *Prvi bosansko-srpski kalendar za prostu godinu 1869* (1868); also *Početni zemljopis za katoličke učione u Bosni* (1871); all under the imprint of the Vilajetska štamparija (Provincial printing press) in Sarajevo.
- 37 Anonymous, *Početni zemljopis za katoličke učione u Bosni* (Sarajevo, 1871), 16–17.
- 38 E.g., see "Vilajetske vjesti," *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 3 (16 January 1869); 7 (13 February 1869); 21 (22 May 1869); 42 (16 October 1869); 2 (17 January 1870); 10 (7 March 1870); 28 (11 July 1870); 45 (7 November 1870); 8 (27 February 1871); 35 (30 October 1871); 47 (22 January 1872).
- 39 Bogoljub Petranović, *Srpske narodne pjesme iz Bosne (ženske)* (Sarajevo, 1867); in *Bosanski vjestnik*, see "Marko Kraljević i sv. nedelja," 7 (21 May 1866); "Narodne pjesne: O krsnom imenu," 8 (28 May 1866); "Svatovske," 9–17 (June–July 1866); "Narodne pjesne bosanskijeh Muslomana," 20–22 (August 1866).
- 40 Jovan Džinić, *Prvi bosansko-srpski kalendar za prostu godinu 1869* (Sarajevo, 1868).
- 41 E.g., *Srbija: Političko ekonomni list* for the year 1868: "S bosanske granice," 3 June; "U Sarajevu," 23 June; "U Bosni," 13 August; "S bosanske granice," 12 September; "S bosanske granice," 15 September; "Iz Hercegovine," 6 October; "S bosanske granice," 17 October; "Iz Bosne," 24 November; "Iz Sarajeva," 8 December; "Iz Sarajeva," 15 December; "Sarajevske škole," 26 December.
- 42 Kurtčehajić, "Vilajetske vjesti," *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 13 (3 April 1871).
- 43 Kurtčehajić, "Vilajetske vjesti," *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 21 (23 May 1870).
- 44 "The same hafiz [Selimanović] came out last year. When we were celebrating the day of his highness the Sultan, a day celebrated in joy across the empire, he publicly shouted 'What do you want you Vlachs, your religion is sh... [in original g...], and you and your church and everything yours is sh..., you have nothing.' Ever since this hafiz came to our town, he fostered negligence among us neighbors, Muslims and non-Muslims [*nas komšije, muslomane i nemuslomane*], giving advice to those who have no knowledge in their heads and who in their ignorance think: If such an

- effendi says this, why shouldn't also I, who know nothing." Kurtčehajić urged punishment for Selimanović while commending local officials for keeping order. "Iz Krupe." *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 51 (18 December 1869).
- 45 The treatment of Jews, Romanians, and Greeks in Serbia came in for especially sharp criticism from the Ottoman Bosnian newspapers; e.g., see "Iz Biograda" and "Vilajetske vjesti," *Sarajevski cvjetnik* 2 and 13 (January and April 1871).
 - 46 For policies in Austria-Hungary, see Lothar Höbelt, "The Austrian Empire," in *The War for the Public Mind: Political Censorship in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Robert Justin Goldstein (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 211–238. While revising media regulations in 1907, Austro-Hungarian officials prepared overviews of press activity in Habsburg Bosnia; see ABiH, GFM, Präs. Nos. 1022 and 1166/1906, and especially Präs. No. 53/1907.
 - 47 Dejan Đuričković, *Bosanska vila* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1975); Muhsin Rizvić, *Behar: Književnoistorijska monografija* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1971).
 - 48 Robin Okey, *Taming Balkan Nationalism: The Habsburg Civilizing Mission in Bosnia, 1878–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Peter Urbanitsch, "Politisierung" and "Die Nationalisierung der Massen," in *Das Zeitalter Kaiser Franz Josephs*, vol. 2 (Vienna: Brandstätter, 1987), 106–124.
 - 49 For Habsburg assessments of Mehmed Hulusi's work, see ABiH, GFM, Präs. No. 884/1884 and Präs. No. 1093/1904.
 - 50 *Sarajevski list* 83 (27 June 1884).
 - 51 *Behar* intermittently used Ottoman Turkish, while *Muallim (Teacher)* actively advocated and used the Arabic script to write Serbo-Croatian until 1914; see "Za arapsko pismo," 3 (1911), 33–37, and "O arapskom pismu kod nas," 10 (1911), 163–169.
 - 52 See articles from *Vatan*: Sejfulah, "Vatanımız bulunan Bosna ve Hersek," 1 (1884); "Bosna'da asar-i atika taharriyatı," 11 (1884); "Şehrimizdeki müzehane," 157 (1887); "Müzehanenin resmi kuşadı," 177 (1887); Hulusi, "Elsine-i şarkiye kongresi," 267 (1889); "Bosna'da asar-i atika hafriyatı," 290 (1890); "Saray'da arkeoloji ve antropoloji konferansı," 513 (1894).
 - 53 Petar Mirković, "Manastir Panagjur," *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja* 1 (1889), 12–15.
 - 54 Karlo Pač, "Rimska nalazišta u kotaru novljanskom," *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja* 1 (1898), 493–502.
 - 55 Henrik Glück, "O književnosti i o novinstvu u Bosni-Hercegovini," *Hrvatska misao* 1 (1903), 281–291.
 - 56 Ljudevit Dvorniković, "O kulturnoj vrijednosti beletristike," *Nada* 23 (1900), 359.

- 57 Anon., [Review of Vuko Pećanac, *Carmina selecta*] *Nada* 24 (1903), 333.
- 58 Anon., [Review of Mirza Safvet, *Trofanda*] *Nada* 18 (1896), 359.
- 59 Among others, see Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); Laurence Cole and Daniel L. Unowsky, eds., *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy* (New York: Berghahn, 2009); Hannes Grandits, *Herrschaft und Loyalität in der spätosmanischen Gesellschaft: Das Beispiel der multikonfessionellen Herzegowina* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2008); Dominique Kirchner Reill, *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation: Adriatic Multi-Nationalism in Habsburg Dalmatia, Trieste, and Venice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012); and Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848–1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

CHAPTER 4

In Search of the Bulgarians: Mapping the Nation through National Classifications

Theodora Dragostinova

This chapter explores how Bulgarian national activists and state agents used national classifications, or terms related to the ascribed religious, linguistic, and ethno-national identity of the population, from the creation of the Bulgarian state in 1878 to the interwar period. The goal is to demonstrate, similarly to the chapters of İpek K. Yosmaoğlu, Edin Hajdarpasic, Irina Gigova, and Brenna Miller in this volume, the role of elites in forging a coherent image of the nation while also silencing alternative views of nationhood at the grassroots level. I examine the resulting normative view of the nation at three levels. First, I analyze how demographers and census takers used various categories to count and classify the inhabitants of the Bulgarian lands by language, nationality, and religion, reconfiguring people in supposedly logical groups that served explicit national goals. Next, I show how these categories were used in the work of two prominent ethnographers who have left a permanent mark on popular thinking and policy-making regarding the composition of the Bulgarian nation and its spread outside of the current Bulgarian territories. Finally, I briefly chart how officials used these categories in two historical situations: the struggle for influence in the Ottoman province of Macedonia in the early twentieth century and the conversion to Christianity of the Bulgarian Muslims during the Balkan Wars. I suggest that demographers, ethnographers, and policy makers, assuming the important role of agents of the state and the nation, all thought in terms of “soft” and “hard” national categories,

viewing some groups of people as more nationally “firm” and more “correct” in their choices than others who needed to be “awakened” and convinced to show their “true” Bulgarian nationality. As much as these activists served as agents of the state and promoted the interests of their nation, they also recognized that, when subdividing people into national, linguistic, or religious groups, a tension existed between individuals’ assumed “descent” and their professed “self-consciousness.” While aware of these contradictions in the identifications of individuals and conscious of the possibility to switch between national identities, these national activists were on a mission to prove the rights of a permanent and fixed Bulgarian nation. In the end, their writings and political decisions sought to erase the reality of ethnic, religious, and national diversity; the mission was to mask or conceal the many subtle alternatives to a homogeneous Bulgarian nation.

The activities of Bulgarian national activists showed important parallels to practices of state- and nation-building evident elsewhere in Europe. Throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the use of linguistic and national classifications was ubiquitous in the imperial and post-imperial context of Habsburg Central Europe, as national activists were trying to separate Czech and Germans in Bohemia or Poles and Germans in Silesia.¹ In the western borderlands of the Russian Empire, there were elusive attempts to sort out the intermixed populations of Poles, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, and Russians.² In the Ottoman Balkans, the process of state-building began earlier compared to the rest of the land-based empires of eastern Europe (Greece became an independent state in 1830), at a time when national categorization had not evolved as a mainstream practice. This development may explain why the use of linguistic, religious, and national identity terms underwent so many fluctuations in the Balkans throughout the long nineteenth century, while it only gained wide currency when national categorizations spread to the rest of Europe. There were “national hybrids” and “illegibles” well into the twentieth century, parallel to the attempts of evolving national bureaucracies to perfect the available categories of religious, linguistic, ethnic, and national ascription and self-description.³ But, despite these constant fluctuations, the term “national indifference,” which is gaining currency in scholarly debates focused on (post-)Habsburg East-Central Europe, may not be appropriate for the (post-)Ottoman Balkans.⁴ The Balkan

national bureaucracies meticulously (if inconclusively) indoctrinated their populations since the mid- to late nineteenth century, and therefore created at least *some* national awareness among the Balkan populations, unlike East-Central Europe where the victory of the nation-state only became clear after 1918 and allowed longer fluidity in collective identifications. Still, the presence of official national demands did not preclude the ambivalence of the Balkan populations that still prioritized religious or ethno-cultural, rather than national, identifications.⁵ This complex dynamic explains why, in the Balkans, the interactions between a nationally ambivalent population and a national bureaucracy on a mission created an unprecedented range of constantly changing religious, linguistic, and ethno-national categories.

Bulgarian activists and state officials had many reasons to feel insecure about their territories and populations. The San Stefano Treaty of March 1878 created a large Bulgarian state that included Ottoman Macedonia, but in July of the same year the Berlin Treaty returned Macedonia to the Ottoman Empire while it created a small Bulgarian principality north of the Balkan Mountains and a semiautonomous province, Eastern Rumelia, to the south. Despite the unification of the two latter areas in 1885, the restoration of San Stefano Bulgaria and especially the “return” of Macedonia to Bulgaria remained the main goal of all Bulgarian politicians from 1878 to World War II. This national orientation determined the outlook of Bulgarian state functionaries and intellectuals who, generally, viewed the Bulgarian nation as not covering its “natural” borders because many Bulgarians, defined as a homogeneous linguistic and historical community, lived outside of the existing state borders. At the same time, the Bulgarian principality had to deal with the complex composition of its own population, with more than 20 percent of its inhabitants consisting of linguistic, religious, or ethno-national minorities; the situation was even more troublesome, from the perspective of the new administration, in the large cities that were predominantly inhabited by “foreign” populations. Even though national practitioners worried about the composition of the population within the state, when formulating policies they also paid attention to those “unredeemed” Bulgarians outside of the current state who had to be “saved” for their eventual unification with the Bulgarian nation. While this chapter focuses on top-down attempts to chart the Bulgarian nation and its territories, the anxieties of national

activists over the loyalties of the population on the ground convincingly reveal that the firm national identities of many assumed Bulgarians were still in the making.

The census and the map, as well as the ethnography that used them in its analysis of populations and territories, became tools of nation- and state-building. Benedict Anderson has shown how the function of censuses is not simply to record an easily distinguishable, clear-cut demographic picture but to create “identity categories” out of the messy realities on the ground, as people are “continuously agglomerated, disaggregated, recombined, intermixed, and reordered” by the state; the census makers’ “passion for completeness and unambiguity” explains the ubiquitous category of “others” in censuses because the “classifying mind” of the state demands a place for everyone. Similarly, maps demarcated territories and marked space to fulfill administrative necessities and did not “represent” realities on the ground. Often, ethnographic works published such maps, functioning as what Anderson calls, evoking the printed works of colonial archaeology, “a sort of pictorial census of the state’s patrimony.” As all these tools of counting and visualizing the nation became the subject of replication and serialization, they also entered the realm of official propaganda.⁶

Exploring debates about the religious, linguistic, and ethno-national heterogeneity of the current Bulgarian territories, and especially the position of the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims in the Bulgarian nation, and analyzing discussions about the demographic composition of aspired territories, and especially Macedonia, this chapter will analyze how Bulgarian activists, acting as state agents, used national categories when counting populations (in censuses), describing territories (in ethnographies), or executing specific policies (in official correspondence).

Demography: Counting the Nation

Bulgarian censuses from 1878 to 1934 used evolving terms to count the various religious and national groups within the Bulgarian realms, alternating between different combinations of ethnicity (*narodnost*), language (*ezik*), religion (*veroizpovedanie*), and citizenship (*podanstvo*), while also vacillating between ethnicity (*narodnost*) and nationality (*nat-*

sionalnost). After the creation of the Bulgarian state in 1878, demographers struggled to disentangle the religious and ethno-linguistic allegiances of people by placing the diverse inhabitants of the Bulgarian lands into firm national, linguistic, and religious groups within the new state, which was understood to be the state of the Bulgarians.⁷ For example, Ottoman censuses had always counted the Muslims as one group. However, Bulgarian officials now subdivided them into Turks, Bulgarian Muslims, Tatars, Gypsies, and others, with the goals of reducing their relative number in the new state and, especially, distinguishing the Turks from the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims. At the same time, demographers continued the Ottoman practice of placing all Orthodox Christians into one group and counted Bulgarians, Greeks, Romanians, Serbs, and Gagauz together as part of the Orthodox Christian religion, regardless of which Orthodox Church they followed, with the goal of emphasizing the religious homogeneity of the Bulgarian residents. Thus, religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups were defined in ways that promoted the dominant place of the Bulgarian nation and the Orthodox religion in the new polity.

Demographers determined that language was the best way to distinguish between religious and national groups, and so the first censuses after 1878 used the criterion of “mother tongue” (*materen ezik*) to determine the national composition of the population. This choice provided the advantage of claiming for the Bulgarian nation populations with unstable national allegiances who spoke a language akin to Bulgarian. The 1881 census recorded twenty-six groups, namely Bulgarians, Turks, Vlachs, Gypsies, Jews (Ladino), Tatars, Greeks, Armenians, Serbo-Croatians, Germans, Russians, Albanians, Italians, Hungarians, Czechs, French, English, Arabs, Poles, Cherkezi, Persians, Slovenians, Kurds, Finns, Dutch, Swedes, and “others unknown” (some 1,000 persons). But this approach caused concerns because, for example, it increased the number of Turks by including in this group the Gagauz (Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians), part of the Gypsies, and others who belonged to the Muslim faith or spoke the Turkish language, but, as Bulgarian demographers saw it, were not Turks.⁸ Thus, the main objective of Bulgarian demographers remained the furnishing of stable criteria to count people.

After the unification of the Bulgarian principality and Eastern Rumelia in 1885, the experimentation with categories continued. The

censuses of 1888 and 1893 still used the criterion of “mother tongue” but added new categories; the new languages added to the existing 1881 list included Tsintsar, Danish, Flemish, and Japanese, the ones removed included Kurdish, Finish, Swedish, and Slovenian, while the term “Romanian” replaced “Vlach.”⁹ While adding and removing categories, the administration was experimenting how to best count the Bulgarian nation and showcase the tolerance of the new state to linguistic and religious groups.

The chief of the Statistical Bureau of the principality of Bulgaria, Mihail Sarafov, worked to unify the statistical services of unified Bulgaria after 1885. Sarafov divided the population into two main groups: Bulgarians and non-Bulgarians (usually described with the collective term *inorodtsi* or “foreigners”).¹⁰ While emphasizing the steady increase of Bulgarians in all urban centers, which was the result of enhanced rural-to-urban migrations, Sarafov also noted the national metamorphosis of some populations in the new state, confirming that the creation of state bureaucracy sped up people’s adoption of a certain nationality. When discussing the large increase in the number of Bulgarians in Stanimaka (today Asenovgrad) from 1885 to 1888, Sarafov explained the trend with “the recognition as Bulgarians of many Greeks who had been registered as such [i.e., Greeks] during the first census.”¹¹ Demographers were fully aware that, under the new conditions of statehood, national affiliations changed. Sarafov similarly endorsed the notable increase of the Orthodox population and decrease of the Muslim population in cities, showing delight that many Turks were leaving Bulgaria.¹² For such state servants, demography was not a value-free science, but served to encourage the growth of the Bulgarian population with practical, specific policies. According to the statistical chief, the out-migration of the Turks was a natural outcome of the creation of the new state and would continue “until the Turkish population disappears or reaches a minimal number.”¹³ Following that logic, the goal of the census was to affirm the dominant role of the Bulgarian nation in the new state.

Overall, the first censuses of the Bulgarian principality showed many discrepancies as far as ethnicity, language, citizenship, and religion, while the term “nationality” was absent altogether. Realizing the need to fix these contradictions, the principality passed a new Census Law in 1897, which became the basis of all censuses until the end of

World War II. For the first time, the census asked directly about the ethnicity (*narodnost*) of the respondent, following the question of language. Demographers employed two approaches to identify the ethnicity of the respondents; officials hoped that the question of “descent” (*proizhod*) would reveal one’s ethnicity, but the open-ended questions also encouraged the respondent to express their “self-consciousness” (*samosâznanie*).¹⁴ This dual approach created controversies because descent implied the permanence of group identity while self-consciousness suggested its malleability. Over time, demographers also used different approaches to language: censuses recorded the “mother tongue” (*materen ezik*) or the first language that a person used in his/her childhood; the “language of regular use” (*obiknoveno izpolzvan*) or “spoken language” (*govorim ezik*) that a person used most frequently at home or at work; and “the ability to use” (*znaene*) only one or several languages.¹⁵ Clearly, the exact definition of linguistic proficiency pursued practical ends of nation-building.

The questions evolved in the 1900, 1905, 1910, 1920, 1926, and 1934 censuses, to include more precise instructions how to determine one’s ethnicity and language, while a further differentiation between ethnicity and nationality emerged.¹⁶ The goal was to fine-tune the linguistic and national categories, placing the population in firm groups. In 1900 and 1905, the two questions asked by the census taker were: “1. What is your mother tongue? Bulgarian, Turkish, or which one?” and “2. What is your ethnicity? Bulgarian, Turkish, Romanian, German, or which one?”. The definitions in the instructions, which were used to clarify in case of uncertainty, elaborated: “Ethnicity—here we mean the ethnographic and not the political ethnicity. Every person shows to which ethnicity he/she belongs according to descent and birth.” Also: “Mother tongue—the language that the person regularly and by preference speaks since childhood.”¹⁷ In 1910, further clarifications specified that mother tongue would be the language one “usually speaks at home” or uses “with most ease.” But this text contained a further clarification, emphasizing that one should not list his/her citizenship (*podanstvo*) or “political nationality” (*politicheska natsionalnost*), but one’s “ethnographic nationality” based on one’s “birth” and “descent.” Clearly, for many people the difference between ethnicity and citizenship was unclear.¹⁸ This confusion explains why the administration issued detailed instructions to census takers; the “default” cat-

egory was descent because, if people were allowed to privilege self-consciousness, that could potentially decrease the number of Bulgarians.

These adjustments were necessary because, as demographers realized, “the statistics in our country [was] of great importance due to the mixed national composition of the population.”¹⁹ In 1910, the Bulgarians were 80.6 percent of the population; while the Turks continued to be the largest minority group at 10.7 percent, their number had been diminished not only through out-migration but also through the diligent recording of other groups. While correlating ethnicity and mother tongue, however, there was a discrepancy, showing that for some language did not correspond to ethnicity, as many spoke Bulgarian as their mother tongue but did not consider themselves to be of Bulgarian ethnicity.²⁰ Using these numbers, demographers also estimated which districts in Bulgaria were more nationally “pure” (*chisti*), designating as “the purest” the Kiustendil area while branding the Varna district as the one with “most foreign elements.”²¹

Overall, the demographers showed a subdued anxiety about the national composition of the Bulgarian residents, constantly emphasizing the growth of the Bulgarian population but also showing concern about the existence of other national, religious, and linguistic populations, collectively described as “foreigners.” By 1910, demographers discussed the national structure of the Bulgarian lands with more certainty. Based on an assumption of demographic stability, they interpreted the steady migration of the Turkish population as a normal part of the population transformation in the country. There seemed to be a relief that the current Bulgarian territories were inhabited by “a large compact mass [*kompaktna masa*] of coethnic [*ednorodno*] Bulgarian population.”²²

The Balkan Wars and World War I created new factors in the demographic dynamics. The growth of the Bulgarian population continued because of the influx of Bulgarian refugees (some 40,000 families or 290,000 individuals) while the number of Turks and Greeks declined because of migrations.²³ Despite the absorption of new territories and populations that had no experience with Bulgarian officials, the administration executed two censuses soon after the wars, in 1920 and 1926.²⁴ Demographers boasted that Bulgaria was the only Balkan country that provided information about language in its interwar censuses, in addition to religion and ethnicity, which gave a clearer demo-

graphic picture, unlike its neighbors Greece, Romania, and Serbia.²⁵ The assumption was that Bulgaria had nothing to hide because it had fewer non-Bulgarian inhabitants compared to its neighbors who had incorporated Bulgarian populations.

The censuses in 1920 and 1926 kept the distinction between ethnicity and language, but the shift began toward the concept of “spoken tongue” (*govorim ezik*), a strategy whose goal was to encourage more people to register as Bulgarian speakers even if they were multilingual. In 1926, the two questions were phrased as follows: (1) “Native (spoken, mother) tongue [*roden (govorim, materen) ezik*]. Which language do you regularly speak at home (Bulgarian or other, which one)?” and (2) “Ethnicity. What is your ethnicity, descent, race [*rasa*]?”²⁶ The order of the questions pursued certain goals. While the census presupposed the self-consciousness of each respondent (by asking the question “which one?”), it also assumed the permanence of one’s ethnicity by posing that one had a certain “race” or “descent” that may not correspond to one’s language.²⁷ This duality led to many discrepancies, demonstrating that individuals were still struggling with the criteria used by the administration.

In the 1934 census, Bulgarian demographers completed the transition from the concept of “mother tongue” to that of “spoken tongue,” defined as “the language one uses to think or regularly speaks at one’s home.” The goal of increasing the number of Bulgarian speakers is clear, considering the success of compulsory Bulgarian-language instruction at schools during this time. The definition of ethnicity remained the same but was expanded to clarify that one’s “ethnic descent” (*narodnostniiat proizhod*) should be recorded “regardless of citizenship or residence.”²⁸ Still, the regime of King Boris III only published the data on language from the 1934 census, not tabulating the category of ethnicity. After more than half a century of state- and nation-building, the administration remained uncertain how to best count the Bulgarian nation.

Overall, interwar demographers considered the data on language most reliable, which was problematic given the switch from “mother tongue” to “language of everyday use” that tended to count more Bulgarian speakers among all ethnic groups.²⁹ What was most notable in the 1930s, however, was the propensity of demographers to use the term “tribe” (*pleme*) to talk about the Bulgarian nation as one that

“has always distinguished itself ... from the rest of the population, by language, religion, traditions, temperament, and mainly economic activity.”³⁰ Employing this primordial view, demographers recorded “tribal” differences between nationalities in the data, such as the birth, mortality, or literacy rates of Bulgarians and Turks. Officials suggested the existence of separate “demographic laws” for each “tribe” due to the differences “in the nature and cultural-religious peculiarities of the two population groups.”³¹ Despite continued uncertainties among the population about the census definitions, for state officials, the nation had officially become a matter of destiny.

Ethnography: Mapping the Nation

Ethnographic works similarly employed different national categories to map the reach of the Bulgarian nation within its current territories but also in the aspired lands of San Stefano Bulgaria. Vasil Kânchov and Stoiu Shishkov were the two most prolific ethnographers who wrote about areas that they saw as rightfully belonging to the Bulgarian nation, but threatened by the claims of the neighbors because of their diverse demography. Therefore, they diligently recorded the presence of Bulgarians and other national groups in these lands. Their categories, however, were less firm than those used in censuses because both authors, even if fervent patriots, admitted the existence of fluctuations within the national groups. While they were aware of the malleability of nationality, however, they insisted on the existence of a primordial Bulgarian nation based on descent and confirmed by criteria such as language, place names, folklore, traditions (*obichai*), and customs (*bit*). In their thinking, there existed “true” Bulgarians who did not realize it, and it was their responsibility to anchor these fluid identities into firm political realities. Further, Kânchov and Shishkov were aware that the Bulgarians had to work against their Greek, Serbian, and Turkish neighbors who were more advanced in their national ideology or had the support of more experienced state machineries.

This thinking demonstrated one difference between the Bulgarian national ideology and practice and those of its neighbors. Both Greeks and Serbs acquired states, viewed as territories of the respective nations, earlier than the Bulgarians. Their programmatic national doc-

uments, “Nacertanje” and “Megali Idea,” which outlined the aspired territorial expansion of each state, both published in 1844, embraced cultural assimilation as a way of spreading the influence of the Serbian and Greek nations to populations outside of the current (small) territories of their states. As a result, Greek and Serb national bureaucracies started to systematically recruit nationally ambivalent populations to their respective national causes since the mid-1840s. By contrast, the Bulgarians only created organized national institutions in the 1870s, first with the Bulgarian Church, the Exarchate, in 1870, and then with the creation of the Bulgarian state in 1878. Bulgarian nationalism, being late, was also defensive vis-à-vis the other Balkan states: the lack of organized institutions to boost the Bulgarian cause until the 1870s determined the focus on the “recovery” of “original” and “true” Bulgarians lost to their “treacherous” neighbors.

Vasil Kânchov’s notes from Dobrudja (Dobrudzha in Bulgarian), the northeastern province of the Bulgarian principality, reveal this dynamic understanding of nationality, which assumed the active role of Bulgarian national agents in “improving” the status of the Bulgarian population within its “own” realms. During his three visits in the late nineteenth century, Kânchov admired the steady increase in the number and visibility of the Bulgarians in Dobrudja. While in 1885 the city of Varna appeared “not to be Bulgarian at all” (*sâvsem ne bâlgarski*) because of its “predominantly foreign population,” ten years later “the Bulgarian language had made good progress” while “a large Bulgarian church ... reminded visitors that they were in Bulgarian territory.” During his trip in 1901, Kânchov concluded, without providing numbers, that “the Bulgarian element in town was strengthened and constituted the majority,” but lamented that foreign merchants held a prominent role in the marketplace while the Bulgarian community was not organized.³² Further north in Balchik, Kânchov questioned the figures of the “non-Bulgarian ethnicities” from official census data. In his opinion, the Turks included many Tatars and Gypsies while the Greeks, “with very few exceptions,” were Gagauz, or Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians.³³ He pointed out that the number of Bulgarians was steadily increasing due to settlers from the interior, but castigated the weak Bulgarian community as “random people without much importance.” But he felt encouraged that the Gagauz had started to “join the rank of the Bulgarians” (*minavat veche v redovete na bâl-*

garite).³⁴ The role of the ethnographer was to provide an optimistic forecast of the future of the Bulgarian nation.

Most famously, Kânchov wrote an ethnographic study of Macedonia in 1900 that became the basic reference of historians and politicians regarding Bulgarian claims in Ottoman Macedonia up until World War I and into the interwar period. In *Makedoniia. Etnografiia i statistika*, Kânchov described the following “peoples” (*narodi*) in Macedonia in the late nineteenth century: Bulgarians, Bulgarian Muslims, Turks, Turkish Christians, Greeks, Greek Muslims, Albanians (Arnauti), Vlachs, Jews, Gypsies, Cherkezi, Blacks (*negri* or *arapi*), Armenians, Georgians, Russians, Western Europeans, and (lastly) Serbs. As is obvious, Macedonians did not exist in the mind of Kânchov. The author was aware of the diverse local terms used to describe the population and distinguished between two geographical areas, the northeast and southwest.³⁵ Yet, explaining the historical fluctuations of the population in the area since the Middle Ages, he concluded: “no doubt, the main local element in Macedonia is the Bulgarian people.”³⁶ His overall goal was to show the existence of a “thick Bulgarian mass with weak foreign mixtures” (*gâsta bâlgarska masa sâs slabi chuzhdi primesi*).³⁷ But Kânchov also noted ongoing changes in the ethnographic structure of the area. In some areas the Bulgarians “quickly Grecisize” while in others they “deeply penetrate the Turkish mass,” showing the dynamic creation of new ethnographic realities.³⁸ In the mind of the ethnographer, the nation was both fixed and changing, and ethnography could assist the process of national consolidation.

When discussing the situation of the Bulgarian Muslims, Kânchov admitted that they often used the name Turks to describe their communities, but he insisted that they “separate[d] from the real Turks and hate[d] them.”³⁹ Even if the Bulgarian Muslims supported Ottoman rule because it allowed them to continue their “life of masters,” they “d[id] not like to mix with the Turks” who had come to the area as colonists.⁴⁰ To prove his point, Kânchov recounted the stories of Pomaks who ate pork and did not cover their women’s faces, stressing that Islam faced challenges subduing the populations.⁴¹ His writings had a straightforward objective: to highlight the survival of the authentic, albeit Islamized, Bulgarians.

When charting the presence of Greeks in Macedonia, Kânchov’s goal was to show that the Greeks “do not form a compact mass.” He

distinguished between Greeks and “Grecisized” (*pogârcheni*) inhabitants of the area, while noting that in some areas the Bulgarians “Slavicized” (*oslaviani*) the Greeks.⁴² His overall conclusion was that it was rare to encounter in Macedonia the “pure Greek types” (*chisti grâtski tipove*) from the islands.⁴³ Further, the penetration of Greek culture in Macedonia varied geographically; some “pure Greeks” inhabited the Halkidiki area but only “Grecisized families” lived north of Serres/Siar.⁴⁴ In his opinion, Grecisization was a harmful phenomenon that Bulgarian national activists could reverse.

As far as the Serbs, Kânchov saw the Shar Mountains as the natural border between Bulgarians and Serbs.⁴⁵ “Pure Serbs” (*chisti sârbi*) only existed in Skopje and Salonica as part of the Serb consular staff. While some around Kumanovo “tend[ed] to feel like Serbs” (*se sârbee*), their language was similar to Bulgarian and therefore “they cannot be counted as a separate people.” “Propagandists of the Serbian cause” were present in Macedonia, but no “communities leaning toward the Serbian cause” (*sârbeeshti se*) existed.⁴⁶ Unlike Grecisization, which was a real problem, Kânchov was not concerned about possible Serbianization.

Kânchov was aware that the national absorption of some groups by others was widespread, and he talked about “Bulgarized” (*obâlgareni*), “Grecisized” (*ogrâcheni*), “Turkified” (*oturcheni*), or “Arnauti-sized” (*poarnauteni*) populations.⁴⁷ Despite this admission of the dynamic national transformations in Macedonia, Kânchov was and continues to be considered the scholar who scientifically demonstrated the numerical predominance of the Bulgarian element in Macedonia in the early twentieth century.

Stoiu Shishkov is most famous for his writings on the Pomaks in the Rhodope Mountains area, but he also wrote about Bulgarian rights in Thrace and Macedonia. In his early work, he showed much anxiety for the Greek influence among Bulgarians. Shishkov distinguished between Greeks and “Grecisized Bulgarians” (*pogârcheni bâlgari*) whom he called “*grâkomani* or Patriarchist Bulgarians [*patriarsheski bâlgari*],” insisting on a primordial view of nationality by descent.⁴⁸ The *grâkomani* did not recognize the Bulgarian church, the Exarchate, after its establishment in 1870, but continued to be under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate in Istanbul, dominated by Greek Phanariots (*fanarioti*), a word that Bulgarian activists used as synonymous of Greek

treachery.⁴⁹ According to Shishkov, while for centuries the Bulgarian Christians, located in mountainous areas, secretly practiced their religion in underground chapels, in the early 1800s the Patriarchate started establishing Greek churches and schools, and the population “fell under the yoke of the Hellenic church.”⁵⁰ Denying the population’s self-consciousness, his verdict was unequivocal: “It is terrible to see two brothers, sharing a mother and a father, one selling his ethnicity and consciousness to the Phanariot Hellenism while the other [remains] a Bulgarian, [and to observe] how the former wants to see the suffering and death of his brother because he is a Bulgarian and not blind like him.”⁵¹ This was an eloquent rendition of the most uncompromising view on the perilous Greek role in the Bulgarian “awakening.”

In the aftermath of the Bulgarian losses in the Balkan Wars, in 1914 Shishkov reflected on the recent defeat of Bulgaria by its neighbors, presenting a predictably Bulgarian-centered interpretation of the national developments in the Balkans: “[In the Balkan Peninsula], the Bulgarian people ... have been exposed the most to the merging and disappearance of their ethnic integrity and the strengthening of other [ethnic groups].... [I]n the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries [this process] reached the state of almost complete depersonalization [*okonchatelno obezlichavane*].... The situation [today] ... is unique and regretful: Grecisized Bulgarians to the south, Romanianized to the north, Serbianized to the west, and Turkified in all directions that include the ethnographic realms of the Bulgarian tribe.”⁵² This statement admitted the dynamic process of ethno-linguistic absorption that accompanied both the Ottoman conquest and the national struggles of the Balkan peoples. But it also cast the Bulgarians as victims of their neighbors who took advantage of Bulgarian vulnerability. Shishkov ardently exposed the conscious denationalization of the Bulgarians by their neighbors who, being more advanced in building their states, “continuously tore apart the body of the Bulgarian nation.”⁵³ The tacit assumption was that the Bulgarians were authentic and pure, while the presumably fake and impure Turks, Greeks, Serbs, and Romanians increased their numbers at the expense of the original Bulgarians.

After the inclusion of the Rhodope Mountains area in Bulgaria following the Balkan Wars, Shishkov was most concerned with the Bulgarian essence of the Pomaks. While lamenting the “Islamization”

of the area, he distinguished between the Turkish colonists, “blood-thirsty thugs” (*krâvozhadni kârdzhalii*), and the indigenous Bulgarians who were subjected to the (always forced) conversion to Islam.⁵⁴ In his analysis of the Ottoman conquest, he divided the population into two groups. First, there were those “irreversibly fused in the Turkish cause” who could only be recognized as Bulgarians based on their non-Turkish place-names and folk legends.⁵⁵ Second, there were the Pomaks, who had “preserved their language, tribal customs [*plemenen bit*], and traditions [*obichai*].” This was “a population Slavic, Bulgarian, in everything in its life, type, language, and blood.”⁵⁶ Shishkov continuously emphasized the vast difference between Turks and Pomaks, concluding that Ottoman policies had failed to create the “typical Turkish mass, devoted to its religion [*pravoverna*] [and] fanatic [*fanaticzna*].”⁵⁷ The ultimate goal was to present the Pomaks as “original” Bulgarians rightfully claimed by Bulgarian activists.

By the end of World War I, Shishkov also had to pay attention to the actions of the Serbs who had now acquired most of Vardar Macedonia, despite Kânchov’s earlier insistence that there were no Serbs in Macedonia.⁵⁸ Similarly to the Greeks, Shishkov distinguished between Serbs and *sârbomani*, or Bulgarians who adopted Serbian consciousness (*sârbeiushiti se*). He blamed the Serbian state and its propaganda machine as well as the rapprochement of Serbs and Greeks who worked together against the Bulgarians in Macedonia. But Shishkov also castigated those “dissenters from the Bulgarian nationality” (*ottsepnitsi ot bâlgarskata narodnost*) who helped the Serbs in their endeavors.⁵⁹ His most powerful condemnation was of Serbian agents who took over Bulgarian communities, first in north and northwest Macedonia but then further to the south, with the goal of “making them Serbian.”⁶⁰

These influential Bulgarian national ideologists remained convinced that all they had to do was to “awaken” the “true” allegiances of a population that was authentically Bulgarian. Unlike the categorical markers used by census makers, the identity terms used by ethnographers were both stable and malleable; they assumed that the Bulgarians were the most compact and pure of all groups in the contested areas, but also envisioned the transformation of the allegiances of other groups who could become part of the Bulgarians. So, ethnographers saw the Pomaks, *grâkomani* and *sârbomani* as “original” Bulgarians that

had to be rescued and returned to their “true” national traditions. For these ethnographers and their readers, history had now also become a matter of destiny.

Policy: Managing the Nation

In addition to census takers and ethnographers, how did state bureaucrats and policy makers use these categories in their daily practices of nation-building? Both the political elites who articulated official policies and the rank-and-file officials who executed these policies on the ground, such as military and civilian officials, teachers, and priests, used national categories extensively when trying to address specific situations related to the national objectives of the state. While one may expect that these state practitioners adopted the firmer national categories of censuses that diligently counted the Bulgarians and non-Bulgarians but did not allow any grey areas in the national, religious, and linguistic identities of individuals, the opposite stands true as bureaucrats seemed to be obsessed with the unstable identities of *grâkomani*, *sârbomani*, and Pomaks, among others. Two examples were particularly illustrative of this trend: Bulgarian efforts to counter Greek and Serbian policies in Macedonia in the early twentieth century and the forced conversion to Christianity of Bulgarian Muslims after the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913. While this chapter is unable to provide a comprehensive analysis of these complex historical developments, even a cursory overview of published historical sources reveals a wealth of evidence to support such a statement. Bulgarian diplomats in Ottoman Macedonia seemed to be replicating the arguments of Vasil Kânchov, seeing the specter of *grâkomani* and *sârbomani* everywhere. The Orthodox clergy, police authorities, and teachers stationed among the Pomaks pursued Stoiu Shishkov’s ideas that the Pomaks were original Bulgarians despite the intervention of many centuries of Islamic influence over them. In both cases, officials subscribed to the belief that, through the correct choices and right incentives, they could cultivate (or awaken) the true allegiances of people who incorrectly saw themselves as separate from the Bulgarian nation. Such ideas, eloquently articulated in ethnographic writings, had a direct influence on the way national activists pursued specific policies.

Macedonia was the priority of Bulgarian politicians in the early 1900s. Bulgarian diplomats in Ottoman Macedonia, who worked to secure Bulgarian privileges in the province through direct negotiations with Istanbul and the mediation of the Great Powers, faced an overarching problem: how to counter the attempts of Greeks and Serbs to expand the groups of assumed *grâkomani* and *sârbomani* in Macedonia at the expense of the Bulgarians and undermine Bulgarian claims of the area.⁶¹ Whereas, in the mind of Kânchov, Shar Mountain was the border between the Bulgarians and the Serbs, with only a few Serbs to the south, the opposite seemed to stand true in the experience of Bulgarian diplomats; Bulgarian consuls constantly worried about the presence of *sârbomani* communities, always pronounced to be disloyal Bulgarians who had betrayed their nation. In the vicinity of Kumanovo, the Bulgarian consul reported of “purely Bulgarian” villages with occasional “*sârbomani* houses,” a casual way to describe the Serbian success in recruiting followers.⁶² Most often, Bulgarian diplomats explained away the presence of *sârbomani* with the presence of “Serbian partisans” (governmental agents) or the activities of Serbian priests that depended on the Patriarchate and helped the Greeks to weaken the Bulgarian presence in Macedonia.⁶³ The assumption was that the *sârbomani* were true Bulgarians with false Serbian consciousness.

Similarly, Bulgarian diplomats automatically labeled as *grâkomani* all Bulgarian speakers of Macedonia who did not transfer under the authority of the Bulgarian Church, and, based on their language, assumed that group to be original Bulgarians. In the Drama area, officials described the activities of Greeks who, being “Bulgarophobes” (*bâlgarofobi*), tried to Grecisize the nearby villages that were “Bulgarian even if under the Patriarchate.”⁶⁴ Bulgarian policy makers maintained a division between Greeks and *grâkomani*, the former referred to as “real Greeks” (*sâshtinski gârtsi*) while the latter characterized as “*grâkomani* Bulgarians” (*grâkomani bâlgari*).⁶⁵ Even worse, among the *grâkomani*, there were some who had not only transferred to the Patriarchate but also acted as “Greek by heart [*po sârtse gârtsi*] ... [even when they were] born Bulgarians.”⁶⁶ There was a close correlation between the national categories proposed in the writings of the ethnographer Kânchov and the policies of official Bulgaria in Macedonia that adopted the nomenclature of Bulgarians, *grâkomani*, and *sârbomani*, all seen as “original”

Bulgarians despite the opposite claims of Greeks and Serbs. Ethnography had been translated into policy.

In addition to Macedonia, another high priority for the Bulgarian officials was the closer integration of the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims in the Bulgarian national body. The climax of these attempts, which viewed the Pomaks as “Islamized Bulgarians,” was the forced conversion to Christianity of the Pomaks in the Rhodope Mountain areas during the Balkan Wars. While claiming the Pomaks as original Bulgarians, consistent with Shishkov’s views, Bulgarian policy makers considered the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims in a different category compared to the rest of the Bulgarians. Ideas to convert Muslims to Christianity were not new to the Bulgarian governments, which since 1878 had tried to undermine Turkish influence while also strengthening the number of Orthodox Christians.⁶⁷ When the conversion of the newly incorporated Pomaks in the Rhodope Mountains was first proposed in December 1912, the “social activists” behind the proposal (teachers and other public figures from Pazardzhik) described the Pomaks as “Bulgarian conationals” (*ednorodtsi*) who, as a “large, compact mass,” “should stay ours.”⁶⁸ The ethnographer Shishkov expressed his opinion that “our Christian and humane duty, as well as the [development of] respect to state authority among the Pomaks ... require their transfer to the Christian faith,” confirming that ethnography was not an innocent academic endeavor.⁶⁹ When Bishop Maxim of Plovdiv gave instructions in early 1913 for the “return” of the Pomaks in his area to the “faith of their predecessors” (*praotecheskata si viara*), he explained that they were “our brothers, by force torn out of the Bulgarian body centuries ago ... who should be enlightened, converted, and saved: to become real, true [*deīstvitelni, istinski*] Bulgarians.”⁷⁰ The Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church similarly described the newly converted Pomaks as “ill-fated brothers” who were now “newly enlightened” because they had embraced the “faith of their predecessors.”⁷¹ The rhetoric of “return” to one’s “real” descent was ubiquitous among both secular and religious figures who all supported the Pomak conversion to Christianity.

Yet the presence of “troublesome elements” and “fanatics” among the Bulgarian Muslims who did not want to accept the new faith, as well as the quiet resistance of the newly converted population, clearly defied the optimistic expectations of Bulgarian officials.⁷² The conver-

sion attempts had counterproductive effects as many Pomaks, wanting to practice their Muslim religion, felt closer to their coreligionist Turks rather than their Bulgarian-speaking Christian neighbors. Some declared: "We have always been Turks and we will remain Turks," demonstrating the continued intermixing of religious and national affiliations in the mind of simple folk.⁷³ The conversion pressures solidified the Turkish loyalties of others who now pursued immigration to the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁴ But the majority of the Pomaks simply wanted to be able to practice their only "true" religion, Islam. In the words of an Orthodox priest dispatched among the Pomaks, "the population is shaken and does not know what will happen to it. It does not know which way to go because it is placed between two chairs and faces a painful crisis.... Turks and Bulgarians—they both torment each newly baptized Bulgarian."⁷⁵ Throughout the conversion campaign, despite the pompous declarations of Pomak loyalty to their "real" religion and nation, Bulgarian officials showed uneasiness how to integrate the Pomaks and their idiosyncratic ethno-religious loyalties within the Bulgarian nation. While being claimed as "true" Bulgarians, it was obvious that the Pomaks had their own unique and hybrid allegiances that escaped easy classifications into discreet national categories. Despite this awareness, claiming bodies and souls for the Bulgarian nation had become the rule.

Conclusion

Demographers, ethnographers, and policy makers extensively used national categories to map the Bulgarian nation and to show its numeric and moral strength over rival national groups. While all state practitioners attempted to show the longevity and permanence of the Bulgarian nation, using notions of origins, descent, and birth, they also demonstrated that definitions of the nation were malleable and changing, dependent both on individual self-consciousness and the state's nation-building objectives. In the end, a hierarchy emerged that pitted the Bulgarians against the non-Bulgarians, while also assuming that some groups were original Bulgarians that only had to be "awakened" and enlightened, to become engaged members of their "true" nation. In the struggle to claim territories and souls, national classifica-

tions functioned as powerful weapons of state- and nation-building that erased ethnic and religious complexity.

NOTES

- 1 Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848–1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); James Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference In a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Caitlin Murdock, *Changing Places: Society, Culture, and Territory in the Saxon-Bohemian Borderlands* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010); and Dominique Reill, *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation: Adriatic Multi-Nationalism in Habsburg Dalmatia, Trieste, and Venice* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012).
- 2 Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
- 3 For the two terms, as applied to former Yugoslavia, albeit its post-Habsburg lands in Istria, see Pamela Ballinger, “‘Authentic Hybrids’ in the Balkan Borderlands.” *Current Anthropology* 45 (2004), 43; and Pamela Ballinger, “History’s ‘Illegibles’: National Indeterminacy in Istria.” *Austrian History Yearbook* 43 (2012), 116–140. For other works that emphasize the fluid and changing identities of populations in the (post-)Ottoman Balkans, see Vangelis Kechriotis, “Greek-Orthodox, Ottoman Greeks or Just Greeks? Theories of Coexistence in the Aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution.” *Etudes Balkaniques* (2005), 51–71; Edin Hajdarpasic, “Whose Bosnia?: National Movements, Imperial Reforms, and the Political Re-Ordering of the Late-Ottoman Balkans” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2008); Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in the Age of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Isa Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800–1912* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and İpek Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).
- 4 For an elaboration on the term, see Tara Zahra, “Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis.” *Slavic Review*

- 69.1 (2010), 93–119. For a collection of essays focused on East-Central Europe, see Pieter Judson and Tara Zahra, “Introduction,” Special Issue on National Indifference, *Austrian History Yearbook* 43 (2012), 1–16, and the rest of the contributions. For a critique of “national indifference,” see Alex Toshkov, “The Phantom Subject of ‘National Indifference’: A Response to Tara Zahra, ‘Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis.’” *Slavic Review* 69.1 (2010), <http://www.slavicreview.illinois.edu/discussion/Toshkovessay-onZahra-final.htm>.
- 5 As I have shown elsewhere, national side-switching often functioned as an “emergency identity” among individuals who did not feel deep loyalty to the nation-state but knew they had to use the national rhetoric as the mainstream official expectation. See Theodora Dragostinova, *Between Two Motherlands: Nationality and Emigration among the Greeks of Bulgaria, 1900–1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).
 - 6 Anderson discusses the census, map, and museum as tools of the colonial state in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 163–185, but many of his observations apply to the function of the nation-state as well. See pp. 165–166, 174, 182, and 184–185. Thanks to Edin Hajdarpasic for reminding me of this chapter.
 - 7 An examination of these contradictory policies is Petâr Koledarov, “Broi na bǎlgarite—1878, 1912, 1928, 1968.” *Naselenie* 4 (1990), 79–98. For an examination of the ethnic structure of Bulgaria, which only discusses Turks, Pomaks, and Roma, see Vania Dodunekova, *Izmeneniia na etnicheskata struktura na naselenieto v Bǎlgariia spored prebroiavaniata v XX vek* (Sofia: Tipografika, 2008). See also Dano Balevski, “Osnovni organizatsionni problemi na prebroiavaniata na naselenieto v Bǎlgariia prez perioda 1900–1985.” *Naselenie* (1990), 22–43.
 - 8 Dimitâr Arkadiev, “Izuchavane na etnicheskiia sǎstav pri prebroiavaniata na naselenieto v Bǎlgariia.” *Naselenie* (1992), 50–51.
 - 9 *Ofitsialna statistika na iztochnorumeliiskoto naselenie* (Plovdiv, 1880); *Obshti rezultati ot prebroiavane na naselenieto v Iuzhna Bǎlgariia (Iztochna Rume-liia) na 1 ianuari 1885* (Sofia, 1888), Table 1; *Obshti rezultati ot prebroiavane na naselenieto v Kniazhestvo Bǎlgariia na 1 ianuari 1888* (Sofia, 1890), 22–27; and *Obshti rezultati ot prebroiavane na naselenieto v Kniazhestvo Bǎlgariia na 1 ianuari 1893* (Sofia, 1897), 20–27, quoted in Arkadiev, “Izuchavane na etnicheskiia sǎstav” (1992), 51.
 - 10 Mihail Sarafov, *Naselenieto na kniazhestvo Bǎlgariia po trite pǎrvi prebroiavaniia* (Sofia: Sredets, 1893), 3. Sarafov is critical of the methodologies of the first censuses (1881 for the principality, 1885 for Eastern Rumelia, and 1888 for unified Bulgaria) that failed to create common criteria.
 - 11 *Ibid.*, 70.

- 12 Ibid., 84–85, 86–87.
- 13 Ibid., 87.
- 14 According to Arkadiev, Bulgaria became one of the first European countries to implement this method of self-identification. See Arkadiev, “Izuchavane na etnicheskiia sâstav” (1992), 51–52.
- 15 For an insightful discussion of these contradictions, see Arkadiev, “Izuchavane na etnicheskiia sâstav” (1992), 48–49.
- 16 In 1900 and 1905 there were only twelve nationalities listed, but in 1910 and 1920 they grew to fifty-five and in 1926 went up to sixty-two. The 1900 and 1905 census listed the twelve national groups also as linguistic groups, but the later censuses listed fewer languages than nationalities; in 1910 the languages counted were twenty, in 1920 they increased to twenty-two, and in 1926 they went up again to twenty-six. Arkadiev, “Izuchavane na etnicheskiia sâstav” (1992), 52, 55–56.
- 17 *Obshti rezultati ot prebroaivane na naselenieto v Kniazhestvo Bâlgariia on 31 December 1900* (Sofia, 1906), vol. I; and *Obshti rezultati ot prebroaivane na naselenieto v Tsarstvo Bâlgariia on 31 December 1905* (Sofia, 1911), vol. I., 25, quoted in Dimitâr Arkadiev, “Izuchavane na etnicheskiia sâstav pri prebroiavaniia na naselenieto v Bâlgariia (1992 i 2001).” *Naselenie* 3–4 (2006), 6.
- 18 *Obshti rezultati ot prebroaivane na naselenieto v Tsarstvo Bâlgariia on 31 December 1910* (Sofia, 1923), vol. I., 11–12, quoted in Arkadiev, “Izuchavane na etnicheskiia sâstav” (2006), 6.
- 19 Dimitâr Mishaïkov, *Naselenieto na Bâlgariia. Demograficheska studiia* (Sofia: Slovo, 1920), 46.
- 20 Ibid., 47.
- 21 Ibid., 48.
- 22 Georgi Danailov, *Izsledvaniia vârhu demografiata na Bâlgariia* (Sofia: Glushkov, 1930), 148.
- 23 Ibid., 155, 214.
- 24 Ibid., 155.
- 25 Ibid., 209.
- 26 *Obshti rezultati ot prebroaivane na naselenieto v Tsarstvo Bâlgariia on 31 December 1926* (Sofia, 1931), vol. I., 11–12, quoted in Arkadiev, “Izuchavane na etnicheskiia sâstav” (1992), 52.
- 27 In the 1956 census, the term used was “natsionalnost” rather than “narodnost” while the question of language was removed. Only seventeen nationalities were listed, a significantly reduced number, even though now the Macedonians were recognized as a nationality. For the rest of the communist censuses, see Arkadiev, “Izuchavane na etnicheskiia sâstav” (1992), 53–56.
- 28 *Prebroaivane na naselenieto na 31 December 1934. Obshti rezultati. Pol, mestorozhdenie, podanstvo, veroizpovedanie, govorim ezik, gramotnost i obra-*

- zovanie (Sofia, 1938), quoted in Arkadiev, "Izuchavane na etnicheskiia sâstav" (2006), 6–7; see also Arkadiev, "Izuchavane na etnicheskiia sâstav" (1992), 52.
- 29 Danaïulov uses language to determine the national categories among the otherwise growing Bulgarian population, mainly because he wants to include the Pomaks among the Bulgarians. See Danailov, *Izsledvaniia*, 210.
- 30 Ibid., 37.
- 31 For a methodological discussion of the difference between Bulgarians and Turks, see Danailov, *Izsledvaniia*, 347–350.
- 32 Vasil Kânchov, *Iz bâlgarska Dobrudzha. Pâtni belezhki* (Sofia: Georgi Nozharov, 1901), 4–5.
- 33 Ibid., 14–15.
- 34 Ibid., 16.
- 35 Vasil Kânchov, *Makedoniia. Etnografiia i statistika* (Sofia: Dârzhavna pechatnitsa, 1900), 31.
- 36 Ibid., 17.
- 37 Ibid., 26.
- 38 Ibid., 27. Here referring to Ber/Biar and Voden.
- 39 Ibid., 42.
- 40 Ibid., 53.
- 41 Ibid., 43. Here referring to Razlog.
- 42 Ibid., 70–71, 72.
- 43 Ibid., 80.
- 44 Ibid., 73–75.
- 45 Ibid., 119–122.
- 46 Ibid., 123.
- 47 Ibid., 88, 90, 98, 100.
- 48 Stoiu Shishkov, *Portret na grâtskoto fenersko duhovenstvo i kovarnite mu dela protiv bâlgarite v Rodopite* (Plovdiv: Ed. Dionne, 1887), 10.
- 49 Ibid., v–viii.
- 50 Ibid., 16.
- 51 Shishkov, *Portret na grâtskoto fenersko duhovenstvo*, 158. Shishkov also wrote about the struggle between Greeks and Bulgarians in Thrace and Eastern Macedonia. See Stoiu Shishkov, *Trakiia predi i sled evropeiskate voïna. Izdirvaniia i dokumenti* (Plovdiv: Ch. G. Danov, 1922); and Stoiu Shishkov, *Bulgaritie v Sierskoto Pole. Izdirvaniia i dokumenti* (Plovdiv: Ch. G. Danov, 1918).
- 52 Stoiu Shishkov, *Pomatsite v trite bâlgarski oblasti: Trakiia, Makedoniia i Miziiia* (Plovdiv: Makedoniia, 1914, 2–3).
- 53 Ibid., 5.
- 54 Ibid., 8.
- 55 Ibid., 4.

- 56 Ibid., 6, 10.
- 57 Ibid., 66.
- 58 Īordan Pop Georgiev and Stoiu Shishkov, *Edna stranitsa ot istoriata na srābskata propaganda v eparhiite Debārska i Veleshka prez 1907–1911 god. Izdirvaniia, dokumenti i statistiki* (Plovdiv: Ch. G. Danov, 1918), 5. This introductory section is based on Kānchov, *Makedoniia*, 119–123.
- 59 Ibid., 6.
- 60 Ibid., 12.
- 61 Based on the documents published in Velichko Georgiev and Staīko Stifonov, *Grātskata i srābskata propaganda v Makedoniia. Kraiat na XIX-nachaloto na XX vek* (Sofia: Makedonski nauchen institut, 1995).
- 62 Ibid., doc. 6, p. 17.
- 63 Ibid., doc. 1, p. 253.
- 64 Ibid., doc. 8, p. 19.
- 65 Ibid., doc. 12, pp. 23–24 and doc. 14, pp. 25–27. This split reminds of the Greek division of the population between “orthodox” (meaning Patriarchist) and “schismatic” (meaning Exarchist); in both the Greek and Bulgarian cases, one of the two groups is assumed to be following the true religion (and nationality) while the other to be misguided in its religious (and national) choice.
- 66 Ibid., doc. 37, pp. 50–51.
- 67 Svetlozar Eldārov, *Pravoslaviето na voīna. Bālgarskata pravoslavna tsārква i voīnite na Bālgariia* (Sofia: Voenno izdatelstvo, 2004).
- 68 Velichko Georgiev and Staīko Stifonov, *Pokrāstvaneto na bālgarite mohamedani 1912–1913. Dokumenti* (Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo “Marin Drinov,” 1995), doc. 3, pp. 14–16.
- 69 Ibid., doc. 4, pp. 17–18.
- 70 Ibid., doc. 19, p. 32.
- 71 Ibid., doc. 22, pp. 35–40.
- 72 For one example, see *ibid.*, doc. 23, pp. 41–43. The rest of the volume contains numerous reports of Bulgarian teachers, priests, and military commandants stationed among Pomaks, which detail the often subdued attitude but other times open resistance of the population.
- 73 Ibid., doc. 214, pp. 419–420.
- 74 Ibid., doc. 217, pp. 422–424; doc. 223, pp. 434–438.
- 75 Ibid., doc. 235, pp. 453–454.

CHAPTER 5

Faith and Nation: Politicians, Intellectuals, and the Official Recognition of a Muslim Nation in Tito's Yugoslavia

Brenna Miller

During the 1950s and 1960s, debates over what defined the Muslim population in Bosnia—whether religion, ethnicity, or culture—came to a head, as Muslim political leaders and intellectuals began to press the Bosnian Republic and the Yugoslav federal governments for official recognition as both a nation, and as a constituent people of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In a process of debate and negotiation, these political and intellectual elites worked together to formulate an argument for distinct, secular Muslim nationhood based on historical, cultural, and political factors. Distinguishing “Muslim” in the national sense, from “muslim” in the religious sense, their efforts met success, first in Bosnia at the 17th Session of the Central Committee in 1968, when the status of Muslims as a nation was affirmed, and then at the federal level through the addition of a Muslim category to the 1971 census.

This chapter explores the process of establishing formal recognition of Bosnian Muslim national identity in the 1950s and 1960s. It considers why these debates came to the fore of Yugoslav politics when they did, paying special attention to the role of Bosnian Muslim politicians and intellectuals, and the varying views advanced among them. In doing so, it aims to draw attention to processes of debate and negotiation, the dynamic and often overlapping nature of political and intellectual life in the country, and the ongoing importance of intellectuals in contesting, formulating, and articulating Yugoslavia's national policies.

As Wolfgang Höpken emphasizes, the “shaping” of a nation by intellectual elites does not automatically render it an artificial construction. “*Grown and created* nations are not mutually exclusive,” and the proliferation of literature and conferences dedicated to the subject of Muslim nationhood in Yugoslavia in the 1960s was reflective of genuine interest in the topic.¹ As demonstrated in Irina Gigova, Edin Hajdarpasic, and Theodora Dragostinova’s chapters in this volume, highlighting the role of intellectuals illustrates the importance of elites in the formative phases of nation- and state-building. The Yugoslav debates about a Muslim nation reflected an effort to grapple with the feelings of intellectual members of the community, articulate a broader consensus of the community as a whole, and also meet an accepted criteria of national definition.

The Historical Context of Muslim Identity Debates

The term “Muslim” as an operational category, and one used specifically in distinction with Serbs or Croats, was not new to the socialist period. In Bosnia, as Edin Hajdarpasic notes, processes of national articulation among Croats and Serbs, typically underscored by narratives of differentiation and separatism from the Ottoman Empire and its legacies, and the “alien” nature of Islam to the Christian Balkans, were met with parallel efforts among some leading Muslims to capture essential Bosnian Muslim literary and cultural canons and to appropriate elements of the Ottoman legacy as their own.² Though mingling with patriotic discourses, quite often defined and expressed through the vein of print media—a source indispensable to intellectuals of the later socialist Yugoslav era as well—these efforts established what would later become foundational senses of historical and cultural heritage. During the interwar era, the policies of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) toward the national question, whether supporting separatist currents in an effort to undermine the monarchal interwar government, or leaning toward centralism and preservation of the Yugoslav union, were later understood to reinforce the basic distinctness of the Muslim community. Particularly in Bosnia, through the interwar era and World War II public speeches, declarations, and pamphlets, as well as internal correspondence very commonly addressed all three “Serbs, Croats, and

Muslims” collectively, supported the establishment of separate military units, including those for Muslims, and generally emphasized the equal political participation of various constituent groups.³

In the immediate postwar period, the president of Yugoslavia, Marshal Josip Broz Tito, continued the refrain of “Serbs, Croats, and Muslims” in preelection speeches during his visits to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1945, and thereafter individuals periodically registered with organizations (such as the Communist Party or the Women’s Anti-Fascist Front) as Muslims.⁴ The 1948 popular census itself offered options for Muslim-Serb, Muslim-Croat, and “nationally undetermined Muslim” (*muslimani nacionalno neopredeljeni*) among the recorded selections for nationality, while the party census taken in Bosnia in 1959 tabulated the enrollment of Serbs, Croats, and Muslims (as well as “others”), and collected reports on variances of political participation with the aim of targeting disproportionate representation in regional party organs.⁵

However, despite customary use of the Muslim category in self-expression, political rhetoric, and even survey statistics, concurrent policies and practices of the post-World War II decades also reflected uncertainty on the “Muslim question.” By the policy of “nations and nationalities” (*narodi i narodnosti*) of the six postwar republics of Yugoslavia, five were recognized as the “national home” of one of the corresponding “nations” of Yugoslavia: Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, and Montenegrins. These five nations were considered South Slavs whose “homeland” existed within the borders of the country.⁶ While the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina was preserved on the basis that “Bosnia is one, because of centuries old common life, irrespective of confession,” and accordingly recognized as a conglomerate of Serbs, Croats, and Muslims, Bosnian Muslims were not included among the list of constituent nations of the federation as a whole.⁷ In addition to leaving open the “Muslim question,” political appointments in the country were generally based on an informal policy called the “ethnic key,” meaning in accordance with a given group’s percentage of the total population. Because Bosnian Muslims were not nationally recognized, their political participation was not guaranteed as it was for Serbs or Croats, particularly at the federal level, and consequently their influence over policies and the direction of funding and development projects could be limited.⁸

Furthermore, while the wartime dictum of “brotherhood and unity” (*bratstvo i jedinstvo*) had allowed for national differences while promoting interethnic cooperation, during the potentially fractious postwar years, an intensifying promotion developed of the idea of South Slav unity in the form of Yugoslavism (*Jugoslavenstvo*), which emphasized the ethnic commonality of the regions inhabitants and their conglomeration into a single state.⁹ For party ideologues who viewed national tensions as a by-product of class conflict and anticipated their “withering away” with greater equality through socialism, asserting the a-national status of Muslims served as a crucial mark of historical progress. As a subject of ideological debate, some party theorists even viewed Muslims as an amorphous core around which a broader Yugoslav community might emerge.¹⁰

For others, such as party member and theoretician Veselin Masleša, clear native ethnic distinctness in the Muslim case was simply absent. Citing a lack of distinct language, geographical dispersal among Serbs and Croats, and having “no subjective awareness—the logical consequence of objective characteristics—of themselves as a nation,” he hypothesized in an article written in 1952 that, “all attempts to create a ‘Bosnian’ or ‘muslim’ nation would fail, because nations are not created administratively.”¹¹ He and like-minded politicians instead supported the theory that ethnically Muslims were essentially Serbs or Croats who had converted to Islam during Ottoman rule. This view was not uncommon among like-minded politicians, who also identified the markers of Muslim identity as primarily confessional, and characterized efforts to promote a Muslim nation as a dangerous vehicle for the continuation of conservative, feudal forces.¹²

By omitting Muslims from the list of Yugoslav nations, the CPY tacitly affirmed the views of individuals like Masleša who saw Muslims solely as a religious community. As such, they then faced further pressure as the government undertook efforts to contain and “tame” religious sectarianism by bringing faith-based institutions and practices under closer scrutiny.¹³ The Commission for Religious Affairs (Komisija za vjerska pitanja) at both the federal and republic level conducted surveillance on religious activities, and at times put political pressure on the Islamic Community (the Islamic religious establishment in Yugoslavia) and its leadership.¹⁴ Religiosity as a mark of “backwardness,” also led to inquiries into the religious activities of party members, and the promo-

tion of the efforts of organizations such as the Women's Anti-Fascist Front (*Antifašistički front žena*) to encourage women through seminars and community meetings to abandon the veil.¹⁵

By the time of the 1953 census, Muslim identity was solely expressible in the category of faith. Where the instructions for national selection and recorded elections in the 1948 census had included a variety of qualified options for Muslim national expression, in 1953 Muslims who offered Serb-Muslim or Croat-Muslim were put in the respective Serb or Croat category, while those who elected for Muslim were placed into a new category "Yugoslav undetermined" (*Jugosloveni neodređeni*).¹⁶ As a result, 891,800 people in Bosnia-Herzegovina (31.3 percent of the republic's population) either declared themselves or were listed as Yugoslav.¹⁷ According to Moša Pijade, redactions to the census allowed for national indifference and alleviated pressure on Muslims to opt for one or another national category. However, while, according to Pijade, no one ever doubted their "Yugoslav origin ... [or their] part of the Yugoslav ethnic community," it was crucial to promote answers that were not "contradictory" and stopped the "unscientific and backward practice" of mixing religious and national labels.¹⁸

Taking the census of 1953 into account then, the 1948 Soviet-Yugoslav dispute itself cannot be considered a flashpoint in the regime's reconsideration of the Muslim question. However, subsequent shifts in Yugoslavia's international position, and its domestic reorientation over the next several decades precipitated a reconsideration of both domestic and foreign affairs, including those toward national policies and the status of Bosnian Muslims. According to Noel Malcolm and Francine Friedman, among others, the reconsideration of Muslim nationhood through the 1960s was in part tied to the country's need for new political allies.¹⁹ The CPY's expulsion from the Cominform left Yugoslavia in a sudden state of international ideological, political, and economic isolation, which urged the government not only into increasing economic and diplomatic contact with the West, but to seek out new allies in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East as well. Malcolm and Friedman hypothesize that the elevation of Bosnian Muslims' status within Yugoslavia, their increased appointment to domestic and foreign governmental posts, as well as their recognition as a nation through the 1960s and 1970s were accordingly an effort to court the international Islamic community.²⁰

On the home front, the slow relaxation of government centralization also opened the door for new debates about a variety of political, economic, and national issues. Through the 1950s, the party, now renamed the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), initiated a program of reforms outlined at the Sixth Party Congress in 1952 and largely codified in the Fundamental Law of 1953, intended to increase “self-management and decentralization”—an effort to reduce statism and inefficiencies, and ease popular dissatisfaction with federal decision-making by putting more control in the hands of local leadership. In addition to a marked reduction of the federal apparatus, by the 1960s, the government allowed for limited privatization and investment, and put renewed emphasis on improving economic conditions in the southern republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina included) to achieve parity with the north.²¹

As decentralization gained currency, it also opened up reconsiderations of national policies, particularly with the publication of the second edition of Edvard Kardelj’s work, *The Development of the Slovene National Question* (*Razvoj slovenačkog nacionalnog pitanja*). Here, Kardelj maintained the earlier assertion that capitalist economic conditions gave rise to nationalist frictions, but scaled back the prediction that socialist equality would signal their end.²² Instead, he suggested that international economic cooperation and interdependence would lead to a peaceful “amalgamation of nations” which valued the “universally human” above narrow national interests.²³ With this shift, “Yugoslavism” soon fell under the undesirable cast of “unitarism,” as it suggested a process of assimilation and an abandonment of national and cultural peculiarities, tantamount to national chauvinism. Furthermore, the manner in which it had been advanced by the state and political interests, a manifestation of bureaucratic-statism, ultimately led Kardelj and the party to call for an end to promotion of the “Yugoslav nation.”²⁴

As a cohesive “new course,” the combination of these broader decentralizing currents opened spaces for expression through education, cultural and linguistic inquiries, as well as political debates for representation and administrative participation in Yugoslavia, more sensitive to local conditions. By 1961, the federal census had opened a category for Muslims, this time construed in the “ethnic sense” (*Musliman u etničkom smislu*), and through the mid-1960s the presi-

dent of the Central Committee of the LCY in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cvijetin Mijatović, began increasingly to press the need to find resolution to the lingering Muslim question.²⁵ Though select individuals had pushed for the inclusion of Muslims to the list of nations since 1945, the 1960s in particular saw the efforts of activist politicians and intellectuals gain traction as a number of Bosnian Muslim party members had risen through the ranks, including Hamdija Pozderac and Džemal Bijedić. With them, senior figures such as Avdo Humo and Atif Purivatrat had worked avidly on bringing attention to the Muslim question in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ultimately resulting in the affirmation of the Muslim nation in 1968 at the 17th and 20th Sessions of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Centralni komitet Saveza komunista Bosne i Hercegovine, CKSKBiH). The declaration was reaffirmed at the 20th Session, where the well-quoted closing statements asserted that, “practice has shown the harm of various forms of pressure ... that Muslims orient themselves in national terms as Serbs or Croats, for it was evident earlier, and present-day socialist practice confirms, that Muslims are a separate nation.”²⁶

Intellectuals and the Affirmation of a Bosnian Muslim Nation

According to Muhamed Filipović, a Sarajevo academic central to the debates of the 1960s, after the Twentieth Party Congress the question of the Muslim nation was transferred from the political to the academic sphere, where, from 1968–1971, serious, focused debate on the subject occurred.²⁷ Anticipating friction on the question, intellectuals as intermediaries between theory, politics, and daily practice were held responsible for establishing a coherent argument that would reconcile the question across these spaces, and direct a future course of policy and action, showing similarities to debates occurring in Bulgaria, discussed in Irina Gigova’s chapter in this volume, around this same time. But, while scholarship on Muslim history and nationhood garnered a level of attention and political interest not afforded in the decades prior, many of the arguments from this period in fact drew on the foundations of earlier research.²⁸

Through the late 1940s and early 1950s, a number of notable works had emerged, most out of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the medieval and Ottoman periods, and in particular the “problem” of Slavic conversion to Islam, as explored in Nikolay Antov’s chapter.²⁹ Among these was the work of Aleksandar Solovjev, which addressed the controversial issue of the nature of the medieval Bosnian Church and its disappearance.³⁰ Solovjev’s central argument suggested that contemporary Muslims could trace their roots in the region back to the Bosnian Church, which he described as Bogomil, and heretical—separate from and in conflict with both Orthodox and Catholic churches of the time. Distinct then from Croat and Serb religious medieval lineages, his work further argued that the Bogomils had voluntarily converted en masse to Islam, both to avoid pressures by Christian religious establishments, and on the basis of shared practices of belief shortly after the Ottoman conquest in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Solovjev’s conclusions, based in large part on studies of symbols inscribed on tombs, was then, and has since been strongly contested by a number of historians.³¹ Nevertheless, for many of the scholars of the 1960s, the potential in Solovjev’s work to establish the deep historical roots of the Bosnian Muslim community, and a sense of the durable cohesion in the lineage of its members, formed a crucial cornerstone of national distinctness.

In the context of the debates of the late 1960s and the 1970s, establishing primordial roots was particularly important to achieving equal national status, as it served to rebuff the pre-Ottoman claims of Serbs and Croats. For those at the core of these later debates the political ramifications of their arguments were never far away, as the lines between politics and academics, both in their social circles and even occupational history were often blurred. Among the ranks of those promoting the Muslim nation were party members such as Hamdija Pozderac (a former professor, member of the Communist Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later president of the republic from 1971–1974), Muhamed Filipović (a Marxist theoretician, philosopher, and later founding member of the Bosniak Academy of Sciences and Arts and a professor from Sarajevo), and Avdo Humo (an intellectual, founder of *Oslobođenje*, and prominent politician during the interwar period who had published several articles on Muslims in Yugoslavia in the journal *Komunist* in 1968).³² Others were academics at the Univer-

sity of Sarajevo, including members of the Faculty of Political Sciences, such as Muhamed Hadžijahic, and the Faculty of Law, such as Mustafa Imamović. Although their views were not uniform, together they endeavored to provide irrefutable “scientific” evidence of the substance of the Muslim nation in a manner compliant with both the ethnic terms of nationhood in Yugoslavia as well as Marxist ideology. In this respect, for many of these intellectuals the most promising case for the existence of a secular, ethnic Muslim nation rested, as in Solovjev’s work, in finding distinctive parallels to the Croat and Serbian national histories of the medieval and Ottoman eras.³³

Two influential scholars whose work was characteristic of these efforts were Avdo Sućeska, an academic associated with the Oriental Institute, and politician Salim Ćerić whose proposals would ultimately inform the party line. Producing a number of studies prior to the height of intellectual interest in the Muslim question in the late 1960s, Sućeska’s body of work focused on socioeconomic factors rather than religious particularism, investigating the high degree of administrative autonomy afforded to Bosnia within the Ottoman Empire, as well as socioeconomic developments and acts of resistance to Ottoman power.³⁴ In a paper presented at a 1968 conference hosted by the Institute for History in Sarajevo on the subject “The Historical Bases of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina” and attended by scholars from a variety of backgrounds and views, Sućeska argued that owing to its unique frontier status, Bosnia had remained distinct within the Ottoman Empire, and its population largely independent from the Porte, both administratively and as Slavs.³⁵ Within this framework, Slavic Muslims, like Croats or Serbs had established a complete society of feudal elite, clergy, and urban and rural members with its own “national” interests. While class interests between the Muslim peasantry and elites also played a role in Sućeska’s narrative, by the nineteenth century the liberation struggles occurring on Bosnia’s Serbian and Montenegrin frontiers, in part through the conflict between Christianity and Islam, had helped to crystallize internal unity, superseding internal class conflicts in favor of national interests.³⁶ The increasingly prominent role of Muslim local elites in politics and administration during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the subsequent transfer of Bosnia to Austro-Hungarian occupation and eventual rule by 1878 had further solidified regional interests and cohesion.³⁷

Like his predecessors and peers, Ćerić too located Muslim ethnogenesis in the pre-Ottoman Bogomil period, and highlighted their coalescence through the Ottoman era.³⁸ In his 1968 monograph, *Muslims of the Serbo-Croatian Language* (*Muslimani srpsko-hrvatskog jezika*) he extended this analysis to the interwar period, including a nod to the “new course” by positioning the interwar Communist Party’s national policies as a foil to the chauvinist and centralist attitudes of the monarchy.³⁹ Ćerić’s work also addressed one of the most important issues facing the political establishment with respect to the Muslim question, its boundaries. Would those of Muslim faith, but of ethnic Macedonian, Albanian, or other descent, be included in the new national category? And if not, what would be the basis of their exclusion? Like the majority of the Sarajevo academic community, Ćerić used the term “Muslims” (*Muslimani*), under the pretense that over the course of the region’s history, as Atif Purivatra had explained, “along with the religious meaning of the term, Muslim identity in an ethnic sense had also crystallized.”⁴⁰ However, as suggested by the title of his work, Ćerić’s analysis included only those Muslims who spoke the Serbo-Croatian language, thus attributing historical cohesion to the Muslim nation, and a firm basis for exclusion from it.

While most intellectuals followed similar veins of thought as Sućeska and Ćerić, these were not the only views expressed regarding the Muslim question. In several years of open debate, prominent Marxist and academic Enver Redžić was the strongest proponent within Yugoslavia of an alternative view. A decorated veteran of the War of Liberation, one of its official historians, and director of the Institute for the History of the Labor Movement between 1960 and 1971, Redžić also focused on the medieval and Ottoman periods, but centered his analysis less on tracing the history of the Muslim community specifically, and rather oriented his analysis through the prism of the territorial and historical cohesion of Bosnia-Herzegovina itself. For Redžić, the suggestive affirmative policies of the interwar and wartime periods had only been in reference to religious or cultural distinctness, not nationality, a view he underpinned by noting the ambiguities in policy toward Muslim nationhood in the postwar period. Affirmation, he argued, was only very recent, and even then unresolved considering the dispersal of Muslims throughout Yugoslavia.⁴¹ On those grounds, he took as the parameters of his work the territorial bound-

aries of the Bosnian Republic and its antecedents. By his account, in pre-Ottoman times Bosnia's Catholics, Orthodox, and Bogomils had all existed under and been aligned with the Bosnian medieval state. It had only been with conquest and conversion to Islam that cleavages in the ethno-national development of the Bosnian population had occurred. Based on this interpretation, Redžić saw potential for a more inclusive territorial-political patriotism within the republic, and strongly preferred the establishment of a Bosnian or Bosniak (*Bošnjak*) national category over the Muslim option.⁴²

Tapping into the anti-assimilationist mood of the political climate, which had already disavowed Yugoslavist centrism, Ćerić, Purivatra, and others openly critiqued Redžić's Bosniak proposal as a form of unitarism that threatened to apply assimilationist pressure to all groups within the republic. Ćerić's critiques in particular reached a fever pitch in 1970, when he authored a pamphlet, *On Yugoslavism and Bosnianhood*, that simultaneously attacked in two parts the Yugoslav idea and Redžić's work.⁴³ The book asserted that promotion of Yugoslavism had facilitated among Bosnian Muslims, "the loss of connection with their own ethnic being," portrayed Redžić's Bosnianhood as similarly problematic, and even went so far as to condemn intercommunal mixed marriages.⁴⁴ According to Šaćir Filandra and Iva Lucic, Ćerić thereafter openly promoted the establishment of specifically Muslim institutions within Bosnia, which, following a 1971 appeal directly to the LCY in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the establishment of Muslim libraries and museums, ultimately led to his falling out of favor with the party.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, Ćerić's contributions to a working articulation of Muslim identity proved useful as the country entered into preparations for the 1971 federal census. Here too in state meetings, the atmosphere of debate persisted. Macedonian party representatives expressed concern that if the category of Muslim was offered as a national affiliation, Muslims in their republic might detach from the Macedonian nation, while several members of the Serbian Communist Party maintained that the category confused confessional and national identities. Conversely, others felt that access to the Muslim category should be extended to allow anyone who felt it fitting of their identity, pointing out the existence of pockets of Slavic Muslims dispersed throughout Yugoslavia.⁴⁶

Despite months of circular discussion at both the federal and republic level, well before its April commencement, state officials determined that in order to capture an “accurate and correct” picture of the country’s demographics on the census, the category “Muslim in the national sense” should be defined as Ćerić had argued, as those Muslims who spoke the Serbo-Croatian language, and, though not strictly limited to these regions, largely geographically centered in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Sandžak, a southwestern region of the Serbian Republic with a large population of Muslims.⁴⁷ These parameters (both linguistic and geographic) were largely drawn from the work of the Sarajevo political and academic community, who, despite controversy on the finer points of history, culture, and linguistics had met in consensus on these secular “scientific” markers of national affiliation. In the context of the census, it was believed these parameters would help distinguish and prevent individuals who may be confused by the religious connotations of the term “Muslim” from erratically selecting it as their national identity. Official policy on the Muslim question explicitly rejected the idea that it was dependent on religious affiliation, and in an effort to address any ambiguity and make the distinction between national and religious identity more apparent, intellectuals and politicians also agreed that nationality would be expressed by capitalization (e.g. *Muslimani*) whereas religious affiliation would be indicated by use of a small “m” (*muslimani*).⁴⁸ There was also significant discussion as to the importance of properly educating interviewers on these linguistic and geographical parameters, suggesting that “national identity” may not always have been purely self-selected, and an active campaign began to educate the public on the parameters of the new category.

Efforts to promote and engage the population on the census category were spearheaded by Atif Purivatra, head of the Commission for Inter-Ethnic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Komisije za međunacionalne odnose BiH), and an active participant in the scholarly debates on Muslim nationhood.⁴⁹ In addition to providing interviews and publishing articles in a variety of journals and newspaper outlets, in February he coauthored an official brochure with politician and sociologist Kasim Suljević out of the Commission entitled “National Aspects of the Census of 1971.”⁵⁰ While the Sarajevo paper *Oslobođenje* and the Islamic journal *Preporod* published excerpts of the

brochure, their earlier coverage of intellectual works, reviews, discussions, and even internal party controversies had also given the sense that the issue was under continued debate, a perception Purivatra wished to check. While past census records suggested that the category would see engagement from the Muslim public, the brochure's purpose was also to combat the persistence of incorrect views, and express the conclusive authority of the state on the Muslim question.

The pamphlet first and foremost stated that the census was "based on adopted political and constitutional principles, and data on scientific grounds," and would facilitate "the free expression of national feelings of every individual and the full recognition of all our nations and nationalities." Complete with past census figures and excerpts from speeches and government reports, the more specific, stated purpose of the brochure was to clarify the issues that had "dominated the political activities in connection with the census," and accordingly focused on explaining the national status of Muslims, and the new attitude toward the Yugoslav census category.⁵¹

With respect to the Muslim question, the brochure emphasized the national character of Muslims as unequivocally Slavs that through unique historical experience had developed into a distinct nation "in a manner similar to Serbs and Croats." According to the territorial and linguistic pillars of Muslim nationhood proposed by the work of intellectuals, the brochure located the geographical roots of the Muslim nation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Sandžak of Novi Pazar—a former Ottoman administrative unit which, it explained, had been affiliated with Bosnia from the time of medieval Bosnian Kingdom until the 1878 Austro-Hungarian occupation. Although allowing that national identity was not governed by location necessarily, the brochure explained that the majority of contemporary Muslims registering as such on the census were anticipated in these regions.⁵² The pamphlet furthermore stated that confessional affiliation should not be mistaken with Muslim nationality, noting populations of religious Muslims in Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia mainly, but also in Croatia and Slovenia, as well as a dispersal of Albanians and Turks throughout Yugoslavia. These Muslims were considered to already possess clear ethnic identities, and were instructed not to register as Muslims by nationality on the census.⁵³ To assist in avoiding "confusion" between the two, the brochure suggested that readers look to language as a

marker of identity, explaining that ethnic Muslims in Bosnia and the Sandžak typically spoke Serbo-Croatian, whereas religious Muslims with alternative ethno-linguistic national identities would likely not.

Though the pamphlet did not discuss the Bosnian Church or Bogomils, or the numerous socioeconomic and class issues that had attracted so much earlier academic interest, Purivatra did take the opportunity to promote his own views on the party's past stance on the Muslim question. He noted the specificity with which the CPY had treated Muslims during World War II by establishing their own military units and the inclusion of a Muslim national option on Communist Party cards. Purivatra also upheld the position of Tito, stating that he had come to recognize the errors in early censuses, noting specifically that in January 1963 at the Seventh Congress of the League of Youth of Yugoslavia, he had insisted that "everybody may be what they are, and nobody should force upon them any national membership."⁵⁴ In this way, the brochure, rather than undermining state policies, preserved the fundamental legitimacy of the government by portraying these shifts as corrective returns to an earlier position.

Equally important, in a section entitled "Regionalism Is Not Equated with Nationality," Purivatra and Suljević explained the preference for the categorical term "Muslim," and the rejection of "Bosnianhood." The brochure started from the premise that "'Bosnianhood' in history did not represent and today does not represent a national category," and was rather, "a state-political and territorial designation." Furthermore, in line with the past decade's ideological, international and domestic political and economic reforms, it strongly condemned the idea as assimilatory. "Bosnianhood," it stated, "denies efforts to develop and promote national relations and represents a sort of Unitarianism in the relations of Bosnia," thus constituting a "negation of the national individuality of all nations and nationalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and disregards its multinational structure."⁵⁵ While Yugoslavism would be retained on the census as a sentiment of brotherhood, it was not considered a national identity. Like Bosnianhood, its promotion as an assimilatory ethnicity or nation had, it was explained, been condemned since the Eighth Party Congress as a bourgeois position that had denied national particularities.

When the results of the 1971 census had been totaled, 1,482,430 individuals (39.6 percent) in Bosnia had selected the new category,

“Muslim in the national sense” (*Muslimani u smislu narodnosti*) as the best description of their nationality. The census also saw a significant drop in those claiming Yugoslav identity, down to 1.2 percent (43,796 individuals) from 8.4 percent in 1961. Given this dramatic shift, it is likely that the agitation of Purivatra and other Bosnian Muslim intellectuals through lectures, conferences, articles, and pamphlets had helped to spread awareness of the Muslim category, and encouraged the public to engage it as descriptive of their ethnic makeup. Success on the federal level signaled the clear formation of an official, “party-approved” concept of Muslim nationhood—historical, distinct, and secular—while at the same time, its popularity in the 1971 census reflected the general sentiments of the population itself.

Conclusion

The efforts of the intellectuals and politicians engaged in debates on the Muslim question through the 1960s had a tangible effect. Recognition was vital in allowing Bosnian Muslims access to government jobs and had major impacts on the allocation of funds for the benefit of Muslim communities. The 1960s also saw a relaxation toward the institutions of Islam (albeit brief), and Bosnian Muslims achieved a greater portion of central political posts.⁵⁶ Despite numerous subsequent works that have challenged many of the historical interpretations of these Muslim political and intellectual activists of the 1960s, the influence of their work has had an enduring and formative legacy even into the post-Yugoslav era.⁵⁷

As Fikret Adanır has noted, the ongoing steps that the CPY took in officially recognizing the distinctiveness of Bosnian Muslims were in essence the recognition of “a *de facto* situation.”⁵⁸ While shifting international politics, reemerging nationalisms within Yugoslavia, and internal decentralization served as strong catalysts to new waves of debate, the recognition of a Muslim nation also reflected both preexisting daily and institutional practices, as well as sentiments of particularism among Bosnian Muslims themselves. As Tone Bringa explains in *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*, Muslims were not confused about their own identity, which was constituted through terms of morality, cultural practices, common experiences, and their multiethnic environ-

ment, even if not necessarily through primordial blood ties.⁵⁹ These tendencies had, however, proved difficult to reconcile with the ethno-nationally oriented state policies of the socialist era.⁶⁰

With this in mind, the Bosnian Muslim case highlights the significance of state rhetoric and ideology in the formation of national identity, not through positive constitution, but through processes of negotiation and reorientation. While decentralizing and nationality policies in Yugoslavia aimed to disarm nationalism as a divisive force, the ever-present and discussed issue of intercommunal relations among the nations of Yugoslavia in state meetings and plenums emphasizes the permeation of national thought into political life in the country, and the significance of national categories as a benchmark for inclusion into the country's political discourse. This emphasis on national identity was underpinned by a focus on secular, primordial ethnicity and historic distinctness, which the intellectuals and politicians of the 1960s readily engaged, but also challenged in their efforts to achieve official recognition for the Muslim community. In this way, Muslim politicians and intellectuals played a crucial role as the "middle ground" between daily sensibilities of community, culture, and belonging, and institutional definitions of nationhood. As such, they not only shaped notions of secular Muslim identity, but also enduringly challenged and expanded the state's definition of nationhood itself.

NOTES

- 1 Wolfgang Höpken, "Yugoslavia's Communists and Bosnian Muslims," in *Muslim Communities Reemerge: Historical Perspectives on Nationality, Politics, and Opposition in the Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia*, ed. Edward Allworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 238.
- 2 Edin Hajdarpašić, "Out of the Ruins of the Ottoman Empire: Reflections on the Ottoman Legacy in South-eastern Europe." *Middle Eastern Studies* 44.5 (2008), 724–726.
- 3 The 1943 resolution of the First Session of the National Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina specifically stipulated the equality of Serbs, Croats, and Muslims within the Partisan movement, and the shared status of Bosnia and Herzegovina. For further elaboration on this interpretation of the interwar and war periods, see Atif Purivatra, "Stav Komunističke partije Jugoslavije prema nacionalnom

- pitanju Muslimana u toku narodnooslobodilačkog rata.” *Prilozi* 4 (Sarajevo: Institute za istoriju, 1968), 491–532.
- 4 See, for example, Archive of Yugoslavia (AJ), f. 836 (Kancelarija Maršala Jugoslavije), II.1/1, “Govor maršala Tita građanima Banja Luke (6 November, 1945).” This particular speech, delivered around the time of the first elections on 11 November 1945, emphasized that reconstruction in Bosanska Krajina after the war had been a result of, and would continue with the cooperation of the regions’ various nations. On the registration of individuals as Muslims during the postwar period, see, for example, AJ, f. 141 (Antifašistički front žena Jugoslavije), 3, 342–349.
 - 5 On the federal census of 1948, see *Federativna narodna republika Jugoslavija, Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. Marta 1948 godine, knjiga I: Stanovništvo po polu i domaćinstva* (Savezni zavod za statistiku i evidenciju: Beograd, 1954), xxvi. That year, 808,921 people in Yugoslavia, and 788,403 people in Bosnia selected the “undetermined” status (30.7% of the entire population of Bosnia), while roughly 70,000 (8%) of Muslims chose Serbian as their ethnic identity and 25,000 (2%) Croatian. On the party census of 1959, see Archive of Bosnia-Herzegovina (ABiH), Centralni Komitet Saveza komunista Bosne i Hercegovine (CKSKBiH), 1959, 18. Commentary on the party census showed mainly underrepresentation of Croats, however the data was also used in later reconsiderations of policies toward Muslims.
 - 6 “Nationalities” were defined as peoples whose homelands existed outside the borders of Yugoslavia, for example Germans, Italians, Russians, etc.
 - 7 Kasim Suljević, *Nacionalnost muslimana: između teorije i politike* (Rijeka: “Otokar Keršovani–Rijeka,” 1981), 204.
 - 8 Francine Friedman, *The Bosnian Muslims: Denial of a Nation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 3.
 - 9 Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962–1991* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 50–51.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, 177.
 - 11 Veselin Masleša, “Muslimansko pitanje,” in *O “Nacionaliziranju” Muslimana*, ed. Alija Isaković (Zagreb: Globus, 1990), 123. Though Masleša, a Bosnian Serb from Banja Luka, did not survive the war, his view that the Muslim nation was a ploy by elite Muslims to gain political power and maintain their leading status, seems to have been influenced by and connected to lingering controversies regarding the legacies of the Ottoman era.
 - 12 Moša Pijade, a prominent party member and president of the Yugoslav Parliament from 1954–1955, echoed his sentiment, stating, “The term ‘Muslim’ signifies belonging to a specific Muslim religious identity, and has nothing to do with the question of nationality.” See Moša Pijade, “O popisu stanovništva,” in *O “Nacionaliziranju” Muslimana*, ed. Alija Isaković (Zagreb: Globus, 1990), 21.

- 13 Pamela Ballinger and Kristen Ghodsee, "Socialist Secularism: Religion, Modernity, and Muslim Women's Emancipation in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, 1945–1991," *Aspasia* 5 (2011), 11–13. See also Armina Omerika, "The Role of Islam in the Academic Discourses on the National Identity of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1950–1980," *Islam and Muslim Societies: A Social Science Journal* 2.2 (2006), 352. Though the practice of Islam was not forbidden, pressure put on the Islamic community and on Muslim religious worship included mosque closures, increased control over the teaching of Islam, the closure of Islamic religious courts, and the nationalization of *vaquf* property.
- 14 Husnija Kamberović, "Bošnjaci 1968: Politički kontekst priznanja nacionalnog identiteta," in *Rasprave o Nacionalnom Identitetu Bošnjaka: zbornik radova* (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2009), 74.
- 15 Robert Donia, *Sarajevo: A Biography* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 218. The CPY ultimately outlawed the veil in 1950. For an extended discussion on de veiling in Yugoslavia and comparison to Bulgaria, see Pamela Ballinger and Kristen Ghodsee, "Socialist Secularism," 17–20.
- 16 *Popis stanovništva 1953, knjiga VIII: Narodnost i maternji jezik*. (Belgrade: Federativna narodna republika Jugoslavija, Savezni zavod za statistiku i evidenciju, 1959), vii and xxii–xxiii.
- 17 Atif Purivatra and Kasim Suljević, *Nacionalni aspekt popisa stanovništva u 1971. godini* (Sarajevo: Komisija za međunacionalne odnose i međurepubličku saradnju Predsjedništva Republičke konferencije Socijalističkog saveza radnog naroda Bosne i Hercegovine, February 1971), 20–21. As Purivatra's brochure suggests, similar totals of "Muslim-nationally undetermined" and "Yugoslav, undetermined" in 1948 and 1953 suggests that registrants in these categories had likely moved from one to the other.
- 18 Moša Pijade, "O popisu stanovništva," 148.
- 19 Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 197, and Friedman, *The Bosnian Muslims*, 154.
- 20 Malcolm, *Bosnia*, 197. Though the Non-Alignment Movement was not officially established until 1961, in 1956 Tito invited Gamel Abdul Nasser of Egypt and Jawaharlal Nehru of India to Yugoslavia. During their visits, the two leaders were introduced to Yugoslavia's Reis ul-ulema. See Zachary Irwin, "Yugoslav Nonalignment in the 1980s," in *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*, ed. Pedro Ramet (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), 254. For a broader discussion of the role of Bosnian Muslims in the Cold War, see Aydın Babuna, "Bosnian Muslims during the Cold War: Their Identity between Domestic and Foreign Policies," in *Religion and the Cold War: A Global Perspective*, ed. Philip E. Muehlenbeck (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012), 182–205.

- 21 Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918–2005* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 265–266.
- 22 Edvard Kardelj, *Razvoj slovenačkog nacionalnog pitanja*, trans. Zvonko Tkalec, 2nd ed. (Beograd: Kultura, 1958).
- 23 Ibid., 441.
- 24 Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias*, 286–287. The current against centralism was highlighted by the expulsion of Aleksander Ranković, the vice president of the Federal Executive Council, the chief of the State Security Office, and a widely regarded symbol of Serb party dominance, in 1966. Though often hailed as the turning point in LYC policy, his ouster was perhaps more symptomatic than causal—a symbol of reforms to centralized governance, and suggestive of the view that there was newly available space in the political, economic, and national landscape open for claim.
- 25 Though not full national affirmation, the “ethnic” Muslim category was popular, drawing approximately 842,200 individual registrants in Bosnia alone (25.7% of the republic population). Analysis of statistical movement between the two censuses suggests that a large portion of these had likely chosen Yugoslav in 1953.
- 26 As quoted in Enver Redžić, *Sto godina Muslimanske politike u tezama i kon-traverzama istorijske nauke* (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2000), 90–91.
- 27 Husnija Kamberović, “Stav političke elite o nacionalnom identitetu Muslimana u Bosni i Hercegovini sredinom 1960–ih godina.” *Prilozi* 38 (2009), 166.
- 28 Omerika, “The Role of Islam,” 355.
- 29 Ibid., 356. The establishment of the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo and the chair of Oriental Studies in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Sarajevo facilitated this work by providing support for the translation and historical analysis of many Ottoman Turkish resources. For a period review of these works, see Wayne S. Vucinich, “The Yugoslav Lands in the Ottoman Period: Postwar Marxist Interpretations of Indigenous and Ottoman Institutions.” *Journal of Modern History* 27 (1955), 287–305.
- 30 Alexander Solovjev, *Vjersko učenje bosanske crkve* (Zagreb, 1948), and “Nestanak bogomilstva i islamizacija Bosne,” in *Godišnjak Istoriskog društva Bosne i Hercegovine I* (1949), 42–79. Solovjev’s work itself was based on earlier research by Croatian historian Franjo Rački. For further discussion of Solovjev’s work and a critique, see Fikret Adanır, “The Formation of a ‘Muslim’ Nation in Bosnia-Herzegovina: A Historiographic Discussion,” in *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography*, ed. Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Faruqi (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 286.
- 31 See for example John V. A. Fine, Jr., *The Bosnian Church: A New Interpretation*. (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1975); Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans: Kisve Bahası Petitions and*

- Ottoman Social Life, 1670–1730* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); and Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 191.
- 32 Humo also served briefly as president of the Executive Council of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. His numerous articles appeared primarily in the journal *Komunist* between July and August 1968.
 - 33 Adanir, “The Formation of a ‘Muslim’ Nation,” 284.
 - 34 For an example of work on the unique role of Bosnian local notables in Ottoman administration, see Avdo Sućeska, *Ajani: Prilog izučavanju lokalne vlasti u našim zemljama za vrijeme Turaka* (Sarajevo, 1965), and for his work on peasant rebellions, “Seljačke bune u Bosni u XVII i XVIII stoljeću,” in *Godišnjak Društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine* 17 (1966), 163–207. For overview of these and alternative views, see Fikret Adanir, “The formation of a ‘Muslim’ Nation in Bosnia-Herzegovina: A Historiographic Discussion,” in *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography*, ed. Fikret Adanir and Suraiya Faruqi (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 301–302.
 - 35 Avdo Sućeska, “Neke specifičnosti Bosne pod Turcima,” *Prilozi* 4 (1968), 43–57. While the conference itself primarily focused on the interwar period, affirming both the policies of the LCY toward Bosnia-Herzegovina, and its republic status, the discussions also touched on the Muslim question.
 - 36 *Ibid.*, 51.
 - 37 *Ibid.*, 54.
 - 38 Salim Ćerić, *Muslimani srpsko-hrvatskog jezika*. (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1968), 50–52. For a more in-depth discussion of Ćerić’s work, see Iva Lucić, “In the Service of the Nation: Intellectuals’ Articulation of the Muslim National Identity,” *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 40.1 (2012), 24–44. Employing a firm Marxist periodization of history, Ćerić argued that the community had drawn increasing distinctness over the course of the feudal Ottoman era, and confirmed the formation of a cohesive social and class structure identified by Sućeska. National development continued through the Austro-Hungarian period, and although during the interwar period many Muslim elites were swayed by assimilationist policies, the fact that the majority of the community avoided categorization as Serbs or Croats was firm evidence of their distinct national status (200–205).
 - 39 As Partisan leader of the 16th Muslim National Liberation Brigade, Ćerić noted approvingly the party’s establishment of dedicated Muslim units during World War II, a position echoed by Atif Purivatra, then head of the Commission for Inter-Ethnic Relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In a paper presented at the 1968 conference in Sarajevo, Purivatra pointed to wartime policies of the CPY that had implicitly affirmed the existence of Muslim distinctness since 1938. See Atif Purivatra, “Stav Komunističke

- partije Jugoslavije prema nacionalnom pitanju Muslimana u toku narodno-oslobodilačkog rata.” *Prilozi 4* (1968), 491–532.
- 40 Atif Purivatra, “O nekim koncepcijama o nacionalnom ‘opredjeljivanju’ Muslimana,” in *Nacionalni i politički razvitak muslimana: Rasprave i članci*, ed. Atif Purivatra (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1969), 25–27.
 - 41 Iva Lučić, “In the Service of the Nation: Intellectuals’ Articulation of the Muslim National Identity.” *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 40.1 (2012), 28.
 - 42 Enver Redžić, *Sto godina*, 94–96.
 - 43 Salim Ćerić, *O Jugoslovenstvu i bosanstvu: prilog pitanju jugoslovenska nacionalnost ili jugoslovenski socijalistički patriotizam* (Sarajevo: Oslobođenje, 1971).
 - 44 *Ibid.*, 50. 92.
 - 45 Šaćir Filandra, *Bošnjačka politika u XX. stoljeću* (Sarajevo: Sejtarija, 1998), 316–20; and Lucić, “In the Service of the Nation,” 36.
 - 46 AJ, f. 507, Izvršni biro, 99 (3 March, 1970) and 100 (10 March, 1970). Fadil Hoxha in particular pointed out the peculiarity of the Muslims of the Sandžak, as well as the Gorani of Kosovo, also Muslims of Slavic origin, and suggested it would be best to let them “speak out.”
 - 47 Some politicians even discussed adding these specific qualifiers in parenthesis on the census, though this was never done.
 - 48 Hopken, “Yugoslavia’s Communists and Bosnian Muslims,” 227. While this was often discussed among academics and politicians, its employment, even in government documents and in news media was at times inconsistent.
 - 49 Atif Purivatra, “Stav Komunističke partije Jugoslavije prema nacionalnom pitanju Muslimana u toku narodnooslobodilačkog rata.” *Prilozi 4* (Sarajevo: Institute za istoriju, 1968), 491–532.
 - 50 Atif Purivatra and Kasim Suljević, *Nacionalni aspekt popisa stanovništva u 1971. godini* (Sarajevo: Komisija za međunacionalne odnose i međurepubličku saradnju Predsjedništva Republičke konferencije Socijalističkog saveza radnog naroda Bosne i Hercegovine, February 1971). While the exact distribution of the brochure is uncertain, excerpts of it were published in several papers, including the daily paper *Oslobođenje* and the Islamic biweekly journal *Preporod*.
 - 51 *Ibid.*, 3.
 - 52 *Ibid.*, 9–10.
 - 53 *Ibid.*, 9–10.
 - 54 *Ibid.*, 14.
 - 55 *Ibid.*, 15–16.
 - 56 See Malcolm, *Bosnia*, 198–199, and Höpken, “Yugoslavia’s Communists and Bosnian Muslims,” 236.

- 57 Fikret Adanır, "The Formation of a 'Muslim' Nation in Bosnia-Herzegovina: A Historiographic Discussion," in *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography*, ed. Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 287.
- 58 Adanır, "The Formation of a 'Muslim' Nation," 282.
- 59 Tone Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 30–31.
- 60 Adanır, "The Formation of a 'Muslim' Nation," 302.

CHAPTER 6

The Feeble Charm of National(ist) Communism: Intellectuals and Cultural Politics in Zhivkov's Bulgaria

Irina Gigova

1989 was not a good year for Todor Zhivkov, the uncontested ruler of socialist Bulgaria since 1962. The man known as Moscow's "most faithful ally" was embroiled in verbal spat with Mikhail Gorbachev over the need for perestroika. The country's image abroad was tarnished by accusations of complicity in the attempt on Pope John Paul II's life and by the attack on its own Turkish minority, euphemistically called the "Revival Process." Burgeoning opposition within the Bulgarian Muslim communities led to protests and clashes with the police in early 1989 that won the sympathy of the increasingly vocal dissident groups. One of these, the six-month-old Club for Support of Glasnost and Perestroika in Bulgaria, submitted a petition to the National Assembly on 9 May 1989, signed by 131 intellectuals, which among other things, demanded full equality for minorities.¹ The Assembly duly ignored the document, but it confirmed Zhivkov's frustrated observation before the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party of early April that, "the Revival process is unpopular as policy and implementation among one section of our intelligentsia. It was not embraced in a satisfactory way by scientific workers and it is supported to an even lesser degree by the artistic-creative intelligentsia. It is obvious that in this case targeted work is necessary with the intelligentsia, so that it would stay firmly behind the party line."²

Zhivkov's exasperation originated in his decades-long courting of Bulgarian cultural producers. That they betrayed him in his final year

in power is not that surprising. More unexpected, perhaps, is that they showed apathy, even resistance, to the Communist Party's mobilization of ethnic Bulgarian nationalism. After all, we have come to expect that the nation would trump anything else in the minds of East European intellectuals. As contributors to this volume show, Balkan intellectuals in particular are judged to be easily seduced by nationalism. In the 1960s Paul Lendvai found the Balkans a specially fruitful field for the interlocking communism and nationalism. Marxism, he argued, never uprooted nationalist ideology in the region, and he took it for granted that "most Bulgarian intellectuals" were "imbued with virulent national feelings."³ In the 1970s, Robert King again focused on the Balkans in studying minority discrimination behind the Iron Curtain, and in 1989 Michael Sharif found "xenophobic communism" to be a defining feature of Ceaușescu's Romania, Zhivkov's Bulgaria, and increasingly Milošević's Serbia.⁴ Yet in the 1990s, Bulgaria's ability to resolve its "ethnic problem" peacefully made less imperative a comprehensive study of the fallen regime's overall quest for national legitimacy.⁵ Western scholars focused instead on Romania and the former Yugoslavia, whose intellectuals seemed to abet the nationalist agenda of politicians.⁶

A comparison between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia illuminates that intellectuals in the former shied away from "xenophobic nationalism" in the 1980s because in the two countries communism and nationalism interacted in dissimilar settings. As Brenna Miller demonstrates in this volume, the "national question" acquired distinct meaning in the context of federal Yugoslavia after its 1948 rupture with Moscow. One of the unintended consequences of the pursuit of "self-management" and "decentralization" in Tito's Yugoslavia was the articulation of a new nation on religious terms that would feed the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s. Having remained within Moscow's orbit, Zhivkov's regime faced a different predicament: how to juggle national dignity with economic dependence on the Soviet Union and fascination with Western technology. This balance was continuously complicated by international events and challenges at home; henceforth the wrapping of Bulgarian's "national communism" went through three distinct phases that make this chapter's subject. The first two—patriotic education and aesthetic education—were forms of cultural nationalism and enjoyed support within cultural circles. The ethnic vision of the mid- to late 1980s, however, achieved the opposite of its slogan of a "united Bul-

garian socialist nation” and drove a wedge not only between Bulgarians and Muslims but between authorities and cultural producers.

This essay not only demonstrates the “fluctuating ideas of the nation” that the volume’s editors describe, but contributes to the growing efforts to explore the complicated, context-specific association of communism and nationalism in Cold War Eastern Europe.⁷ It focuses on one group of intellectuals—writers—whose work was highly esteemed (and regulated) by communist regimes, both as an embodiment of the national spirit and an accessible vessel of ideological messages. Indeed, the powerful Union of Bulgarian Writers became emblematic of the “symbiosis” of intellectuals and power under Todor Zhivkov.⁸ A closer look at the dynamics and interests behind this “symbiotic” relationship, however, reveals multiplicity of intents, not unlike that identified by Edin Hajdarpasic in the public sphere of imperial Bosnia. The regime’s “national communism” alienated various cultural constituencies over time. Some communists did not approve of the turn toward “chauvinism,” nationalists were unhappy with Zhivkov’s continued deference to Moscow on key issues such as Macedonia, and liberals remained frustrated with the lack of freedom. The solution pursued by Zhivkov—the “velvet prison” of privilege and power—kept writers docile but uninterested in the creation of a hegemonic national discourse.

Patriotic Education

The search for a Bulgarian “national communism” began tamely, as a quest to restore a degree of national dignity and popular legitimacy. In regards to the former, the Communist Party quietly sought to correct the extreme manifestations of the postwar rhetoric of Slavic brotherhood, opposition against “bourgeois chauvinism,” and love for the great Soviet Union.⁹ These principles had led in the late 1940s and early 1950s to a widespread rewriting of history, bans on books with perceived nationalist content, and, most distressingly for old patriots, the recognition of a Macedonian nation within Yugoslavia and a Macedonian minority at home. As elsewhere in the Soviet bloc, a cautious revaluation started after Stalin’s death with a Soviet nod of approval. Previous names for streets and towns quickly renamed for Soviet or

partisan figures were restored, even when they commemorated khans and tsars. Institutes and critics encouraged the use of folk motives in the arts and the everyday. While the Writers' Union published in the early 1960s thirteen volumes of songs, fairy tales, legends, and parables, professional and amateur folk dance troupes (some of them appearing in Donna A. Buchanan's chapter) flaunted local traditions at home and abroad.¹⁰ Literary historians and critics rehabilitated Bulgarian authors, such as Ivan Vazov, Peio Iavorov and Elin Pelin, previously dismissed as chauvinist or bourgeois. The party leadership even changed its tune on Macedonia, denying the existence of a Macedonian language in 1963 (now downgraded to a western dialect of Bulgarian) and dismissing Yugoslav claims to the population living in Pirin Macedonia (the southwestern region of Bulgaria).¹¹

These activities and more were included under the umbrella of Zhivkov's slogan of the 1960s: patriotic education. The beauty of the concept of patriotic education was that it could stretch to absorb everything and target anything. It could mean respect for indigenous traditions and national interests within the Soviet bloc, or it could also aim to curb the unwanted consequence of Bulgaria's gradual opening from the late 1950s to Western investors, technology, and tourists.¹² Anxious about the penetration of the West's popular culture and following the lead of Khrushchev's attack on modern art, in April 1963 Zhivkov vehemently criticized young Bulgarians' blind admiration for Western music, fashion, movies, cars, and their "scornful attitude toward everything that is ours, native, Bulgarian."¹³ Since renewed isolation was economically unfeasible, the solution was to balance outside influences with "patriotic education."¹⁴ In a speech before the youth organization, in October 1967 Zhivkov outlined the program's elements: commitment to internationalism (love for the Soviet peoples and Marxism-Leninism); appreciation for Bulgaria's 1,300 years of history, with renewed interest in its medieval empires and the ancient Thracian civilization that preceded them; love for native land, folklife, and traditions; and, of course, military preparedness of young men and youth's labor education.¹⁵ Zhivkov appealed to "the entire ideological front" to assist in the creation of a holistic consumer and popular culture in the national spirit—from music, to everyday clothes and interior design.¹⁶

While the public task of "patriotic education" was to shield young Bulgarians from the harmful West and instill national pride, on the

important “ideological front” it dovetailed Zhivkov’s claims of post-Stalinist liberalization and democratization. After the war, following the Soviet model of centralized mobilization, artists and intellectuals were integrated in specialized unions that became the gatekeepers of creative life. In 1949 the then party leader Vŭlko Chervenkov told the unions that “the cultural front will be guided by the party, as will all other fronts of the social-political and economic life” and that socialist realism was the only accepted style.¹⁷ State institutions, such as the Committee for Science, Art, and Culture (1948–1954) and later the Ministry of Culture (1954–1956), served to solidify party control over intellectual and artistic spheres. Through the 1950s party oversight was direct and heavy-handed; no less than the party’s Central Committee’s Agitation and Propaganda Department supervised the activities of the creative unions. Party leaders—first Chervenkov, then Zhivkov—also met with union members to praise, censure, or patronize them.¹⁸

As Zhivkov began to speak in the early 1960s about culture in more autonomous terms, the Central Committee created a separate Arts and Culture Department, the existence of which between 1962 and 1984 corresponded with the era of “cultural nationalism.” The change was more than cosmetic. If in the Stalinist period the party’s cultural policies lay in the hands of ideologically loyal bureaucrats, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the CC’s Art and Culture Department was staffed by established and known artists, writers, composers, and filmmakers.¹⁹ This shift in staffing revealed that the party increasingly entrusted cultural producers with policing one another. The assimilation of cultural elites into the state and party bureaucracy was accomplished through an ingenuous reorganization of the “cultural front” that purported to rely on and encourage collaborative, grassroots efforts.²⁰

This process deserves some explanation. In 1962, the joined Ministry of Education and Culture, established after the tumultuous events of 1956, was split and direction over culture was granted to a new Committee for Culture and Art. The new organization was chartered to assist the “patriotic” upbringing of the nation “in the spirit of the progressive [national] traditions and on the basis of socialist realism.”²¹ With the rank of ministry, the Committee was conceived as a “state-public” venture of trade unions, creative unions, and the youth movement, a wink to Yugoslav experimentation with “self-management.”²²

The appearance of democratization and decentralization in the “cultural front” was strengthened in 1966, when the revised statutes of the Committee (now Committee for Art and Culture, or CAC) envisioned an elected leadership of prominent cultural figures chosen on municipal and regional levels. The election results were to be announced at the First Congress of Culture in 1967. The changes were justified as a return to nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century traditions of grassroots cultural life through local cultural clubs (*chitalishta*).²³

The First Congress of Culture in 1967 (followed by three more in the next two decades) established a pattern that would mark the entire Zhivkov era: of grandiose, pretentious, and expensive spectacles that hardly obscured the lack of democratic substance. In preparation, over 1,100 municipal councils for culture and art convened to elect congress delegates. All in all 1,820 men and women gathered in Sofia on the eve of the national holiday of culture, 24 May, the Day of Cyril and Methodius, the ninth-century creators of the Cyrillic alphabet. A thorough script directed not only the several-day-long nationwide celebrations of historical and socialist glory that preceded the event but also the speeches of the yet-to-be-chosen Committee members.²⁴ At the closing of the Congress, Zhivkov urged delegates and the new Committee leadership to build on the three “inexhaustible sources of our national socialist culture”: (1) “the thousand-year-old Bulgarian culture” and the creative “genius” of the Bulgarian people; (2) “the present socialist life which the people build with enthusiasm and optimism”; and (3) “mankind’s progressive culture.”²⁵ Led until 1975 by the respected poet and Bulgarian Writers’ Union member Pavel Matev, CAC became the venue for cultural producers’ institutional and administrative involvement in the regime’s quixotic quest to synthesize socialist values, national essence, and ideologically sound openness to the West.

The Bulgarian Writers’ Union and Its Discontents

A look at the interactions of party leadership and Bulgarian writers in the postwar years illustrates why and how Zhivkov and his speech writers envisioned that the three pillars of patriotic education would appeal to the Congress delegates. The Writers’ Union was conceivably the most important creative organization in the eyes of the regime.

Founded in 1913 and with about 140 renowned members by the time the communist-led Fatherland Front coalition took power in early September 1944, it was the first organization that left-wing intellectuals took over.²⁶ Two waves of organized verbal attacks and arrests—in 1944-1945 and the late 1940s—cowed the Union into a pliant mouth-piece of socialist realist propaganda during the Stalinist dictatorship of Vŭlko Chervenkov. Ferment resumed in 1955 with demands for intellectual freedom and went on for more than a year before the party, now led by Todor Zhivkov, suppressed “revisionist” sentiments in the aftermath of Hungary’s revolution. To simplify the complex dynamics of the literary scene, two main groups of writers spoke against the oppression of the regime and the confines of socialist realism. Within the Union these were old communists, embarrassed by their own contribution to the consolidation of Stalinism.²⁷ Outside the Union was a cohort of up-and-coming poets, inspired by the Soviet “Thaw” to search for modern, uninhibited ways of expression. Both groups spoke about freedom, not nationalism, and it is within their circles that Natalia Hristova finds the germination of small but continuous intellectual dissent.²⁸

For intellectuals, there were grounds to grumble because in 1957, in the wake of the 1956 revolutions (Khrushchevite and Hungarian), the Stalinist Chervenkov returned to head the newly created Ministry of Education and Culture. In April 1958, in a much-cited speech before the Writers’ Union, Zhivkov affirmed party-mindedness as a leading principle and—following Khrushchev—urged writers to be “more among the people, [and] closer to life!”²⁹ The mood improved in late 1961, when, in preparation for next year’s Eighth Party Congress that was to affirm his leadership, Zhivkov reached out to intellectuals with promises of continued de-Stalinization and an attack on dogmatism. The effervescent liberalization of 1962 burst out in the form of spontaneous public poetry readings, improvisation in theater, and debates over free verse and novel styles in painting and film. This moment of cultural liberalization became a defining experience in the lives of the intellectuals who came to the fore at the start of the decade. Its end was all the more painful for that.³⁰ Secure at home and in tune with Khrushchev, in April 1963 Zhivkov convened writers and artists to point out a plethora of recent ideological and aesthetic lapses.³¹ It was in this context of dashed hopes for greater freedom that in May 1963 the new Committee for Culture and Art was constituted to work for

“the ideological-aesthetic, patriotic and communist upbringing of the Bulgarian people.”³²

In contrast to the 1950s, this time many novelists, poets, and critics did not yield easily to the regime’s efforts to rein in literature in the service of the “patriotic and communist upbringing” of the people. As new studies have shown, the dynamic 1960s saw a number of unorthodox exegeses of the official line. Asked to be proud of their cultural heritage, individuals turned to eras of the past that were taboo; urged to be “among the people,” they showed the tragedy of socialist modernization; in depicting the new socialist reality they celebrated the individual rather than the collective. Zhivkov, however, also showed flexibility. He personally wooed charismatic and popular literati to form a circle of confidants. His cultural agents incorporated most literary “acts of rebellion” in the socialist canon, “sanitizing” the liberating potential of artistic innovation with an institutional stamp.³³ Let us see how these trends worked in practice.

In its emphasis on “patriotic education,” the regime encouraged investigations into national history that intersected with its political agenda. As relations with Yugoslavia worsened, it promoted Dimitŭr Talev’s tetralogy of novels (written between 1952 and 1966) about the Bulgarian national movement in Macedonia, a subject that had cost the author two terms in labor camps in the 1940s. The regime also appears to have commissioned Anton Donchev’s novel *Time of Parting* (1964), which depicted the forced Islamization of the southern Rhodope Mountains very much along the lines of Stoiu Shishkov, described by Theodora Dragostinova in this volume. The book would assist the anti-Islamist campaign against Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking Muslims) that was underway at the time, just as two decades later a film based on it accompanied the “Revival Process.”³⁴ Zhivkov’s rehabilitation of cultural heritage, however, led some writers, artists, and scholars in the less desirable direction of interwar cultural trends and figures that had been broadly dismissed in the 1940s as bourgeois, elitist, and cosmopolitan. It was precisely their cosmopolitanism, however, that appealed to the isolated Bulgarians of the 1960s, who turned to the interwar generation for inspiration to create a native art that could transcend the parochialism of socialist realism.³⁵ An interesting figure in the revived interest toward the recent past was Boris Delchev, who transformed from a dogmatic communist critic in the 1940s to a lifelong promoter of Bulgar-

ia's pluralistic cultural heritage.³⁶ As an editor in the Writers' Union's publishing house, Delchev assisted the printing of memoirs of interwar authors ostracized after the war.³⁷ In the following two decades, even as he went out of favor with Zhivkov, Boris Delchev privately encouraged a younger generation of critics and literary scholars to unearth, study, and publicize the cultural history of monarchical Bulgaria.³⁸ While such endeavors were not cheered by the authorities, it is likely that they saw the partial rehabilitation of the recent Bulgarian past as safer than intellectuals' yearning gaze toward the contemporary West.³⁹

Equally suggestive was the regime's reception of works that treated contemporary, socialist topics.⁴⁰ In prose the most important innovation of the 1960s was the so-called "roots-searching" (*korenoturshcheska*) literature, which turned to the universe of the Bulgarian village for themes, characters, and setting. While at first glance adhering to Zhivkov's appeal of being "among the people, closer to life," in practice the new prose chipped at the pillars of socialist modernization: industrialization, urbanization, and collectivization.⁴¹ The genre's best representative, Iordan Radichkov, depicted village existence before collectivization as materially deprived but rich in imagination, empathy and cooperation, harmony between nature and man; qualities destroyed by the new order.⁴² Initially party critics also had little tolerance for the young poets of the early 1960s, who brashly used free verse and innovative poetic rhythms to express the new lyrical self in the context of Bulgarian urbanization, edification of science and technology, and the mass culture of film, radio, and TV. Yet by the end of the 1960s both Zhivkov and official critics hailed the uniquely Bulgarian gaze of the root-searching authors and the new poetry's optimistic embrace of scientific modernity.

The three-pronged definition of patriotic socialist Bulgarian culture announced by Zhivkov at the First Congress of Culture aimed to propitiate such intellectual and aesthetic pushes and pulls. The resulting campaign for "patriotic education," however, did not receive uniform endorsement. Older, interwar communists watched it gather steam with chagrin. Poet Hristo Radevski, famous for his 1929 panegyric poem "To the Party," but at the time isolated for criticizing Zhivkov's policies, noted in February 1968 in his diary: "As it goes—we have the conditions for the emergence of a new term: Marxism-chauvinism. For example, according to Marxism-chauvinism Bulgar-

ians have been, and will always be the greatest nation in the world (perhaps after the Russians).” The parenthetical comment was an ironic recognition of the game Zhivkov played vis-à-vis Moscow, but he mostly worried about the consequences of “patriotic” rhetoric. “When I read and hear the bombastic patriotic phraseology today, I remember the chauvinistic hysteria of the old days [the 1930s]. The same fake pathos and the same terminology,” he reflected later in the year.⁴³

Radevski was also not the only one to notice that the nationalist bombast accompanied yet another hardening toward youth, intellectuals, and ordinary Bulgarians. Bulgaria’s political police—the Sixth Division of State Security—was organized in late 1967 to subdue percolating demands for liberalization.⁴⁴ In the spring of 1968 the party instituted a careful review of forthcoming plays and films, records, radio and TV broadcasts, books and periodicals to ascertain their ideological trustworthiness.⁴⁵ Worried about Czechoslovak spring winds, the Central Committee also proposed the convention of a Congress of Bulgarian Writers in May 1968, with guests from fellow socialist countries, to counterbalance the effect of the liberal-minded Fourth Congress of Czechoslovak Writers of June 1967.⁴⁶ It was followed by the Ninth World Youth Festival between 28 July and 6 August 1968, which showcased mostly the ubiquity of Bulgaria’s police forces. The year ended with witch hunts among students and intellectuals to restore “militant party-mindedness” in the arts.⁴⁷ In March 1969, at a report and election conference of the Sofia youth organization, Zhivkov acknowledged that in the new international situation the focus on the past greatness of the Bulgarian nation was unfeasible. “The present day of Bulgaria—this is the apex of its thirteen-century history.” Patriotism was redefined as loyalty to the socialist motherland, the socialist system, and the Soviet Union.⁴⁸

Aesthetic Education

The regime must have recognized that this approach could not sustain the support of its cultural elites (or citizens for that matter), so it turned to the peculiar concept of “aesthetic education.” First mentioned at the Tenth Congress of the party in 1971, over the course of next year “aesthetic education” was linked to the party’s resolution to improve the standards of living for ordinary people, adopted at the

Central Committee's December 1972 plenary session. A multifaceted program of aesthetic education was to become the feature that distinguished the future socialist material abundance from mindless bourgeois consumerism.⁴⁹ Naturally, a few days later the Second Congress of Culture was so inspired by this idea that it adopted it as its guiding goal.⁵⁰ It was the program of "aesthetic education" that enabled CAC to build up its national and institutional presence. By 1975, the Committee articulated a comprehensive, long-term (1975–2000) nationwide program for aesthetic education that encompassed all major spheres of life: labor and the workplace, family, interpersonal relations, physical culture and sports, everyday culture, and leisure.

On the surface, "aesthetic education" was an abandonment of nationalism; in reality, even more than "patriotic education," it became an elastic canopy that housed an assortment of initiatives that continued the selective glorification of the Bulgarian past and Western cultural and scientific achievements, while staying faithful to socialist principles of internationalism, democracy, and opposition to materialism and capitalism. Thus it was the most original concept to come out of Bulgaria in the 1970s. Its main spokeswoman was Zhivkov's daughter, Liudmila Zhivkova, a historian trained in Sofia, Moscow, and Oxford, who entered Sofia's cultural circles in 1969 with a "literary salon" of selected younger artists and writers. She joined CAC in 1972 as a deputy chairwoman, and then headed it from 1975 until her death in 1981. By the end of her life she was also a member of the Central Committee and Politburo, a testimony to CAC's political weight.⁵¹ During her term Bulgarians witnessed the greatest promotion of their cultural heritage abroad and an incredible variety of cultural initiatives at home, all in the name of building "mature socialism." The rhetorical weaving of these themes is seen in one of the first initiatives of Zhivkova: the global tour of a splendid exhibit of ancient Thracian gold.⁵² At its opening in Vienna in March 1975, Zhivkova drew a parallel between the unfamiliar ancient Thracian civilization, which "rivals and in some manner outshines the classic Greco-Roman culture," and contemporary Bulgarian culture:

On the territory of Bulgaria some of the most ancient human civilizations and cultures naturally and organically intertwine—Thracian, Greek, Roman, Proto-Bulgarian, Slavic, [and] Byzantine, each

of which has left deep roots in the thousand-year old Bulgarian culture. The Bulgarian nation justly calls itself the worthy inheritor and successor to the best historical traditions, bequeathed by antiquity. In the conditions of socialist Bulgaria these traditions were not only preserved, but enriched and filled with new, more humane content. Bulgarian national culture rests on a broad democratic base. A nation that builds a cohesive, complex national program for aesthetic education, feels with pride and dignity to be the real, proper successor of its ancestors, who bestowed upon it unique chefs-d'oeuvres of human culture and progress.⁵³

The idea that Bulgaria's unique civilizational heritage was embodied in the genius of its national culture and the achievements of its socialism characterized many of Zhivkova's statements. The desire to boost Bulgarian dignity abroad and at home was at the core of CAC's activities during her era. Even ideas that originated in Moscow were co-opted to promote Bulgaria's image abroad; that was the case with the 1977 International Writers' Conference in Sofia, which the Soviet Union hoped would smother the renewed intellectual unrest in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Since they bought attention to Bulgaria abroad, the regime organized four more such meetings, even though Moscow no longer paid the bill.⁵⁴ In the following years the extravagant expenditures on international events reached unseen (and unaffordable) levels, from one scholarly symposium after another to the long-term program celebrating individual "harmonious development" through the life and work of "well-rounded personalities" such as the Russian painter and writer Nikolai Roerich (founder of the international movement for peace in the 1920s, who was out of favor with Soviet authorities), Leonardo da Vinci, and Lenin.⁵⁵

In the minds of most Bulgarians two particular celebrations embodied the coexistence of universal claims and national emphasis of Zhivkova's era. In an effort to globalize the initiative of "aesthetic education" Bulgaria hosted under the aegis of UNESCO an International Assembly of Children, "Banner of Peace," in 1979. More than 1,300 children from seventy-six countries attended, 17,000 works of children's art from around the globe were displayed, and more than 300,000 Bulgarian children were engaged in events leading up to the Assembly. The summit of the age, however, was the 1,300th anniver-

sary of the Bulgarian state, a multiyear celebration with thousands of exhibits, publications, conferences, dedications of monuments and museums, and even Bulgaria's first blockbuster movie, *Khan Asparuh* (1981), about the origins of the Bulgarian state.⁵⁶

Zhivkova's circle immodestly spoke of a second "Golden Age"—a notion still popular today, as Donna A. Buchanan confirms in this volume—the first one being the flourishing of arts and letters under King Simeon I (893–927). She encouraged experimentation and had the reputation of shielding cultural producers from the State Security's Sixth Division. For cultural producers ready to go along with official initiatives, the late 1970s were indeed a "Golden Age" of interactions with foreign visitors at the international writers' meetings, unprecedented opportunities to travel abroad to popularize national culture, cherished access to the knowledge, information, and the goods of the West (at the time when Zhivkov tried to purge Western rock from the national radio), and seemingly limitless funding. We have to remember that until the 1970s Bulgaria had been one of the most closed bloc societies, in stark contrast to Poland, Hungary or Yugoslavia. Zhivkov's emphasis in the previous years had been on Bulgarian history and tradition; for those who feared the regime's "cultural isolationism, national self-satisfaction, [and] anti-intellectualism," his daughter's cosmopolitanism must have been a step in the right direction.⁵⁷

The massive investment in "aesthetic education" inevitably had pernicious effects. CAC's "radical vision of undeniably totalitarian parameters"⁵⁸ was developed by members of the so-called "April Generation" of cultural producers, who, wooed by Zhivkov, entered the Central Committee, CAC, and other state institutions in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The name referred to the 1956 April Plenum that saw Zhivkov's rise to the political scene with claims as a reformer, but by the 1980s it was applied broadly to cultural producers who did not oppose Zhivkov's line.⁵⁹ Radio Free Europe analysts were right to see a "deal with the disillusioned and dissatisfied intellectuals by bringing them into the regime's system as nominally full partners."⁶⁰ In 1970 two-thirds of the 165 full-time staff of CAC were members of the creative unions.⁶¹ In 1975 all 13 full-time employees of the Central Committee's Art and Culture Department were well-known cultural producers.⁶² The all-pervasive ideal of harmoniously developed, creative citizens enabled CAC (renamed the Committee for Culture in 1977) to

expand its institutional and symbolic presence nationwide; one report gives its employees in 1988 as more than 17,000!⁶³ This in turn gave cultural producers (or cultural bureaucrats) visibility, prestige, and funding that enabled the “symbiosis” of intelligentsia and authorities in the 1970s.⁶⁴

The underbelly of CAC’s “Golden Age” was “the great bore of the seventies,” to use the words of Atanas Slavov, who emigrated in the late 1970s.⁶⁵ Gone was the creative fever of the 1960s. Not only did intellectuals suffer from the regime’s stiffened attitude toward cultural freedom; many agonized at the sight of the Writers’ Union becoming, under the leadership of two friends of Zhivkov—poet Georgi Dzhagarov (1966–1972) and critic Pantelei Zarev (1972–1980)—a “feudal administration,” penetrated by obsequious loyalty to the Leader, “putting on airs” (*golemanshtina*), and bitter rivalries over spoils.⁶⁶ To prove his ideological reliability, in late 1970 Dzhagarov orchestrated a protest letter to the Noble Prize Committee on behalf of the entire Union, denouncing its award for literature to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Five Union members who abstained from signing were immediately punished: the party members were expelled from the party, the nonparty writer from the Union for opposing the leadership.⁶⁷ The scandal set the tone for the rest of the decade. Relations with Soviet cultural producers were reactivated, the official critics (some former 1960s rebels) once again extolled “civic” (political) poetry,” and the editorial boards of the Union’s periodicals and publishing house were purged.⁶⁸ Boris Delchev wistfully noted that “literary bureaucrats [we]re given the right of way,” who then stifled advocates of alternative modes of conduct.⁶⁹ These same “pharisees,” as Hristo Radevski called them, vehemently attacked in 1975 the two-volume work of literary scholar Iordan Vasilev and poet Blaga Dimitrova, who situated the innovative and popular interwar poet Elisaveta Bagriana in the context of a supportive, tolerant, and ethical artistic community.⁷⁰ In November 1977, Blaga Dimitrova stirred the waters again with an interview for *Nouvelles Littéraires* (the first conversation with a foreigner without prior party screening) that expressed hopes for more freedom of information and expression. Only a few weeks later, in early December Zhivkov mentioned the word “dissident” for the first time in a meeting with young “literary workers.” There was no dissidence in Bulgaria, he said, which he defined as a political movement produced by foreign propaganda and media. There were “potential dis-

sidents,” but it was normal to have “individuals thinking in different ways” (*drugoiache misleshti*).⁷¹

The mood of discouragement and cynicism was amplified by the endless series of mandatory and carefully scripted official gatherings, conferences, and award ceremonies that kept authors mindlessly busy in the 1970s: “deadly monotonous, boring, and insulting theatrical spectacles.”⁷² To promote the party-minded literature that the regime expected, the Union ensured generous financial support for works on “contemporary” themes. Between 1973 and 1976, some 160 such contracts were signed; in other words, more than half of the 328 members of the Union had been “stimulated” to write.⁷³ Hristo Radevski called this “a cunning and effective policy by our so-called political leaders. They massively give contracts to a mass of mediocrities, and to the talented—to keep them silent and not criticize.”⁷⁴ With the years he only became gloomier: “We are witnessing the mass spiritual self-destruction of the creative intelligentsia, which partakes in the corruption of the ruling elite or passively watches it,” Radevski sighed in September 1979.⁷⁵ Even authors esteemed by Zhivkov, such as Iordan Radichkov, found the transformation of writers into an obedient, materialistic, and nepotistic administrative body dismal and disheartening.⁷⁶

To critical observers sitting on the sidelines, the future of the country lay at stake. The old communist Radevski saw Zhivkova’s quick rise to the height of the party and state hierarchy as a symbol of the “fascisization” of the regime, with its cult of personality, nationalism, and continued censorship.⁷⁷ In 1980 he reflected, “Our leaders try to raise the international authority of Bulgaria not through civic transparency in social relations and high-quality production, but via expensive advertising noises and trapping foreigners in various festivities.”⁷⁸ Boris Delchev not only expressed dismay in his diary that Zhivkova’s exoteric and mystic ideas passed for Marxism; he dismissed the regime’s claims to defend national interests. Reflecting on the firing of a journal editor for publishing an article that brought up the prickly question of Bulgarian minorities in Yugoslavia, Romania, Moldova, and the Ukraine, Delchev concluded: “We speak of national consciousness but we give up our language and history with administrative decrees.... At that same time—pompous tirades with a whiff of nationalism in order to drive out a sense of inferiority.”⁷⁹ Yet even participants in the festivities were troubled by what they saw. Professor

of West European literature and literary critic Simeon Hadzhikosev, who was in Lyon during the “national-socialist hysteria” in connection with the upcoming “1,300 years” celebration, found the acts of diplomats and cultural producers crisscrossing the world to advertise Bulgaria “endlessly provincial and pitiful.”⁸⁰ Witnessing the celebrations in Vienna, historian and historical fiction writer Vera Mutafchieva saw mostly self-interest and personal enrichment and a state-approved wasteful spending on anything that could raise immediately the prestige of the country abroad.⁸¹ Such extravagant funding for politicized culture was criminal at a time when food staples—white bread and meat products—started to disappear from the stores.⁸²

United Bulgarian Socialist Nation

By the end of 1981 even in the high ranks of power the mood was no longer celebratory and Zhivkova’s sudden death in July was not the only reason. Moscow looked with disapproval at the extravagant celebrations that advertised Bulgaria as a civilization older than Russia. The unrest in Solidarity’s Poland also cooled the spirits as did the ballooning (and still unestimated) bill of the relentless festivities. As the party embarked on yet another economic reform, Zhivkova’s long-term projects were scaled down or forsaken, leaving behind only the cult of the leader’s daughter. In 1982–1983, Bulgarian culture entered another frost that culminated in the Fourth Congress of Culture’s anachronistic appeals to the unity of the intelligentsia and the cultural front behind the party line and the state leader.⁸³ This was a slap in the face after the cosmopolitan spirit of Zhivkova’s days, when scholars and artists traversed the world and Western literature, music, theater, and TV programs flew back into Bulgaria.⁸⁴ The Central Committee’s Art and Cultural Department was folded into the new section for Ideological Policy and a high-ranking party official came to head the Committee for Culture from 1982 to the end. While the Committee continued to fund hundreds of cultural initiatives annually, in January 1985 it received a new assignment: assisting the “consolidation and raising of the Bulgarian patriotic socialist consciousness of the people.” This time the target was Bulgarian Turks, who were proclaimed to be the heirs of pure Bulgarians forcefully Islamized and Turkified by the Ottomans.⁸⁵

Various explanations have been offered for the decision of the party to pursue the forced assimilation of its Turkish population: international (Turkey's coup d'état of 1980 and rise of Islamic fundamentalism), demographic (imbalance between birthrates of ethnic Bulgarians and Turks), and political (distraction from the economic crisis of the mid-1980s).⁸⁶ Yet if this nationalist policy also aimed to mobilize the frustrated and fragmented cultural front behind an ailing party, as historian Ivan Elenkov argues, it backfired.⁸⁷ The extreme nationalism of the "Revival Process" (a name that drew on the emotive power of the nineteenth-century Bulgarian national "awakening") drove a wedge between the regime and most intellectuals, whose worldview could no longer be parochial after the 1970s. The hardening of the party line toward culture after 1982—expressed in the denouncing of films, confiscation of books, and the audible presence of the political police—bridged the gap between the supporters (the Dzhangarovs) and critics (the Radevskis) of Zhivkova. Both groups resented the party's effort to put a lid on the processes of experimentation, liberalization, and cultural decentralization (through provincial clubs, universities, and publishing houses) that had accompanied the program of "aesthetic education."⁸⁸ How could the party try to resume its ideological control, when just in the sphere of literature, between 1981 and 1984 some 1,443 literary works were published?⁸⁹ Indeed, recent studies have argued that by the 1980s Bulgarian authors enjoyed complete "thematic autonomy," and they employed a variety of genres (satire, science fiction, crime, and spy novels) in open social criticism.⁹⁰ Beyond literature, forms and spaces of debates and interactions emerged in the 1980s to constitute an active public sphere, an emerging civil society.⁹¹

Under the circumstances, perhaps it is not surprising that Zhivkov involved neither cultural producers nor academics in his new plans for the "revival" of the Turks. The campaign against the Bulgarian Turks proceeded for weeks in secrecy before rumors eventually reached Sofia in January 1985. Delchev's journal records conversations with friends about the "Revival Process" and his regrets about its manner (not its intent): "violent, therefore ineffective actions that make us vulnerable."⁹² In late 1986 Radevski compared the critical newspaper reports on attacks against the Kurds in Turkey to the "villainy" against the Bulgarian Turkish population that domestic propaganda had sold as "patriotic impulse."⁹³ Writer and historian Vera Mutafchieva "testified"

in her memoirs to the shock of the intelligentsia and historians in particular, who were not consulted about the initiative but were then asked to justify it by any means possible. According to her, the demands of the Committee for Culture for events and publications in support of the campaign faced an “uncoordinated boycott” from the creative unions and academic institutes, whose programs remained mostly on paper.⁹⁴ Ivan Elenkov’s archival research confirms the Central Committee’s dissatisfaction with the creative unions, for their work between 1985 and 1987 was characterized by apathy, stale initiatives, and leaving the burden of propaganda tasks to their few “reborn” Muslim members.⁹⁵ Instead, many Bulgarian intellectuals turned their attention to the widely available Soviet periodicals that after 1987 published one critical article after another, galvanizing more and more individuals against Zhivkov’s regime and giving them courage to openly challenge the system in 1988–1989.

In his aggravation, Zhivkov played his last card against the unruly cultural producers. In March 1988, upon reflecting on the general disintegration of party influence in the creative unions, the university, and the Academy of Science, the Central Committee embarked on another major rethinking of the relationship among culture, party, and state.⁹⁶ In preparation for the Fifth Congress of Culture, to be held in mid-November 1989, the party articulated a new “economic mechanism” in cultural production. Initiative, self-financing, and competition for state funding were to drive artistic and cultural life from that point onward. The target was the accumulated wealth of the creative unions, which gave them independence. These were measures similar to the ones used by Ceaușescu against the unruly Romanian Writers’ Union in the 1970s.⁹⁷

The penalizing goals of this perestroika were obvious when we consider the hectic activity of the political police against dissident figures from 1988 onward. In May 1989, facing growing protests within the Muslim and dissident communities, the Central Committee ordered special paramilitary units to deal both with the unrest in the ethnically mixed regions and the “‘committees’ and ‘clubs’ with clandestine antisocialist focus,” i.e., the rising opposition.⁹⁸ The leadership also suddenly opened the border with Turkey in late May to push out its hostile Muslims. In the ensuing panic and disorder, hundreds of thousands Bulgarian Turks left, some more voluntarily than others, leading

to economic disruption, and further domestic and international protests. In the early summer the Central Committee once again urged the unions to activate their patriotic work to no avail. Professor Pan-telei Zarev, a long-time member of the Writers' Union and the Bulgarian Academy of Science and a loyal associate of Zhivkov, regretfully noted that the national fervor that had penetrated the working class, the agricultural workers, and many educated Bulgarians, had not touched "that part of the intelligentsia which is of crucial importance nationwide. Why are the creative unions silent? Never before have Bulgarian writers been so apathetic toward the historical destiny of our people."⁹⁹ Truth be told, Zhivkov's ethnic nationalism did find some supporters in the ranks of the Bulgarian Writers' Union, as Plamen Doinov reveals in his study of the organization in 1989. These last believers in the party's devotion to the national idea were soon bemused when in late December, only six weeks after Zhivkov's ousting, the Central Committee suddenly overturned the entire "Revival Process" and blamed it on the fallen leader.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

"Our mass propaganda has the amazing ability to generate disgust toward its subject,"¹⁰¹ wrote Hristo Radevski in May 1980. The overuse of nationalist rhetoric failed to convince many of the regime's sincere love for the Bulgarian nation, as it contradicted the reality of economic decline, party-condoned corruption, and restrictions on personal and intellectual freedom. Instead, many intellectuals saw the regime's employment of nationalism as manipulation of people's genuine patriotic feeling. Looking back from the 1970s to the preceding two decades, émigré novelist Georgi Markov reflected that "the use of nationalism for infusion of fresh and natural blood in the agonizing body of the party ideology was the only solution [to the problem of party legitimacy]. But Bulgarians are allowed to be Bulgarians as long as they are communists. If they are not communists, they are not Bulgarians at all."¹⁰² Markov, who had been the golden boy of the regime until he ran away in 1969, disparaged the party's "castrated" patriotism as nothing more than an instrument of control by Moscow's loyal ally. He also blamed the party-sponsored national clamors for stifling

real patriotism and thus assisting the “national nihilism” it sought to prevent through its “patriotic education” and Zhivkova’s policies.¹⁰³

This author takes a more sympathetic stance toward Zhivkov’s argument that he promoted patriotism within the limits permissible in Cold War Europe.¹⁰⁴ In his memoirs, first published in 1997, the elderly leader reminded readers that the reward for Bulgarian loyalty to Moscow were “oil, raw materials, open markets, [and] security.”¹⁰⁵ Indeed scholars agree that Zhivkov’s Bulgaria was the primary beneficiary of Soviet investments and subsidies and that the Soviet consumer market accepted low-quality Bulgarian products without a murmur. The Soviet Union was also important for Bulgaria’s perceived security dilemma, with two NATO members on its southern border and two socialist countries—Yugoslavia and Romania to the west and north—that were not always friendly. Considering the geopolitical restriction on its foreign and economic policy, it is not surprising that the regime relied on cultural initiatives to boost its legitimacy. It was a cultural nationalism that fostered Bulgarian national pride through its distinctive folklore, the greatness of its medieval empires, and the antiquity of Thracian civilization.

The problem was that in promoting its cultural nationalism the regime privileged a group that found these themes of limited appeal. If Bulgarian literature served the Bulgarian monarchy’s “jingoistic-irredentist nationalism” before and during the two Balkan and First World Wars, the experience of defeat, as Maria Todorova rightly notes, inexorably altered Bulgarian nationalism.¹⁰⁶ Mainstream interwar writers abandoned expansionist and exclusive nationalism for an effort to serve Bulgaria with a native literature of universal appeal.¹⁰⁷ As mentioned earlier, these “cosmopolitan” men and women were rediscovered from the late 1950s onward and were offered as an alternative to dogmatic, ideological art. The “April Generation” of cultural producers, which served Zhivkov so well, was also outward-looking and modern in its orientation. Inward-looking, ethnic nationalism simply could not galvanize support in the way it did in Yugoslavia, where it channeled disagreements and disillusionments with the status quo.

However, it is not my intention to turn Bulgarian cultural producers into cosmopolitan heroes surrounded by nationalist neighbors. The reality is that a very small number of the 15,000 members of the “artistic-creative intelligentsia” voted with their feet and left the creative

unions, and an even smaller number openly disagreed with the regime. Most writers accepted the price of their privileged status. Those who decried the surrounding reality did so in the privacy of their journals, the published examples of which underpin a considerable portion of this analysis. Since Zhivkov did not consider withdrawing the regime's lavish support for cultural producers until the end, we do not know whether competition for resources would have made Bulgarian writers more nationalistic, as it did in Romania. Finally, while I have argued here that most Bulgarian intellectuals in Zhivkov's Bulgaria looked beyond the limits of communist ideology and nationalism, it is not obvious that the majority of Bulgarians followed in their footsteps. Donna A. Buchanan's chapter indicates that Zhivkov's decades-long policies of "patriotic education," "aesthetic education," and manipulation and falsification of history have left deep marks on the Bulgarian public that remains very protective of its historical myths until today.

NOTES

- 1 Evgenia Kalinova and Iskra Baeva, *Bŭlgarskite prehodi, 1939–2002* (Sofia: Paradigma, 2002), 244.
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Part II:

CONTEMPORARY DEBATES

CHAPTER 7

E mos shikjoni kish e xhamija
(And Look Not to Church and Mosque):
How Albania and Macedonia Illuminate
Bosnia and Bulgaria¹

Victor A. Friedman

Introduction

The Balkans constitute the only region in Europe west of the former Soviet Union where indigenous Islam remains a vital force.² While a comparison of Bosnia and Bulgaria in the 1990s can be made in terms of the violence and relative non-violence that characterized their respective transitions, when the role of Islam in the two countries is examined, Albania and Macedonia shed light on Bosnia and Bulgaria, respectively. In a sense, Bosnia can be viewed as a failed Albania, while Macedonia, with its distinct language and Orthodox Church, resembles Bulgaria, but, as we shall see, not quite. Moreover, a consideration of these issues must also include another EU country beside Bulgaria, namely Greece, which shares Muslims with Bulgaria and Macedonian Christians with Macedonia. This chapter will bring together the mutually illuminating contrasts of these various Balkan nations vis-à-vis religion and language. In keeping with the goal of this volume, as articulated by Dragostinova and Hashamova in their introduction, I hope to complicate views of Balkan national narratives by showing that Islam in the Balkans can often best be understood in its complex relationship to sources of identity other than religion, especially language, to which it is at times subordinate and at times superordinate. This approach, in turn, argues for a more nuanced view of the role of Islam in Europe than that promoted, for example, by Huntington in his notorious “clash of civilizations” argument.³

Albania

During the course of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Albanian national activists succeeded in creating an ethno-national identity based on language and, by stages in the second half of the twentieth century, also succeeded in positioning Albania as the land to which Albanian speakers outside Albania turn for linguistic authority (although not entirely without contestation, as will be seen below).

The title of this article is taken from a line in what Robert Elsie in his authoritative two-volume history of Albanian literature describes as: “the most influential and perhaps the most popular [poem] ever written in Albanian”: “O moj Shqypni” (O Albania!) by Pashko Vasa (or Vaso Pasha Shkodrani).⁴ It is interesting to note that most of Vasa’s work was published in French and Italian, but this poem has assured his place in the Albanian national canon. The poem was probably written around 1878, at a time when, in response to the Treaties of San Stefano and Berlin, as Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria laid overlapping claims to all the Ottoman territories that had large numbers or majorities of Albanian speakers, an Albanian league was organized in Prizren. The details and complexities of the League of Prizren need not concern us here, but it is worth noting that while some saw it as a Muslim organization that shared interests with Bosnian Muslims in Bosnia, others moved it in the direction of being an Albanian national organization, which is how it is remembered today.⁵ The point of Vasa’s poem is in line with the second direction, calling on Albanian speakers—most of whom were Muslim but significant numbers of whom were Eastern Orthodox or Catholic—to move beyond the mosque and church for the purpose of forming a state. The poem is still vital today, and it is recited dramatically by school children in Albanian folk costume, waving old-fashioned flintlock pistols to wild applause at public events and school assemblies. Most of the poem—it runs to 73 lines—praises Albanians’ former wealth and heroic past and laments their current state “like the oak fallen to the ground” (*sikur lisi rrxuem për dhe*). But one passage in particular (lines 27–40), raises the issue of ethno-national identity versus religion and is worth citing here together with some of the opening (1–2) and closing (64–68) lines.⁶

“O moj Shqypni” (c. 1878–80) by Pashko Vasa (Vaso Pasha Shkodrani)

1 O moj Shqypni, e mjera Shqypni,

2 Kush të ka qit me krye n’hi?

...

27 Shqypnar, me vllazën jeni t’u vra,

28 Ndër një qind çeta jeni shpërnda;

29 Sa thon kam fe, sa thon kam din,

30 Njeni: jam turk, tjetri: latin

31 Do thom: jam grek, shkje disa tjerë,

32 Por jeni vllazën, t’gjith, more t’mjer!

33 Priftnit e hoxhët ju kan hutue,

34 Për me ju da e me ju vorfnue.

35 Vjen njeri i huej e ju rri n’votër,

36 Me ju turpnue me grue e me motër;

37 E për sa pare qi do t’ftoni,

38 Besën e t’parëve t’gjith e harroni,

39 Baheni robt e njerit t’huej,

40 Qi nuk ka gjuhën as gjakun tuej.

...

64 Çonju, shqypnar, prej gjumit çonju,

65 Të gjith si vllazën n’nji bes shtrëngonju,

66 E mos shikjoni kish e xhamija,

67 Feja e shqypnarit asht shqypnarija!

68 Qysh prej Tivarit deri n’Prevezë,

...

1 Oh Albania, poor Albania,

2 Who has shoved your head in the ashes?

...

27 Albanians, it’s your brothers you’re killing,

28 Into hundreds of factions your lives are spilling,

29 Some say “I have God!” others “Allah,”

30 Some say “I am Turk,” others “Vlah,”

31 Some “I am Greek,” “We’re Slavs,” say others

32 But, my hapless people, you are all brothers!

33 The priests and the *hodjas* have confused you,

34 They divide, impoverish, and abuse you.

35 At your hearth sits some foreign mister,
 36 Shaming you with your wife and sister;
 37 And how little money will you get,
 38 All the oaths of your ancestors to forget,
 39 You enslave yourselves to foreign men,
 40 Who have not your language nor blood, then!
 ...
 64 Awaken, Albania, from slumber, awaken!
 65 Let an oath as brothers to bind us be taken!
 66 And look not to church and mosque:
 67 The faith of the Albanians is the unity of Albanians!
 68 From Bar down to Preveza...

The concept of *shqyptarija* (modern standard Albanian *shqiptaria*, a noun derived from *shqiptar*, meaning Albanian person), which Elsie translates “Albanianism,” refers either to the collectivity of the Albanian people or the sense of being Albanian (consciousness, patriotism, etc.). Today the term “*Shqiptaria*” can also be used to refer to the contiguous territory where Albanian is spoken, which includes territories of all of Albania’s current neighbors plus three districts in southeast Serbia.⁷

The last time I heard the poem recited in public was 20 November 2008. The occasion was the rededication as a museum of the house where the Congress of Monastir had taken place a century before, in what is today Bitola, Republic of Macedonia. The story of the house and the Qiriazhi family who owned it demands its own study. Suffice it to say here that today that Congress of 1908 is celebrated in book and song as a watershed of Albanian unity thanks to the decision taken there to use the Latin alphabet (as opposed to the Greek or Arabic) for writing Albanian. In fact, however, two different Latin alphabets were in competition—one using only diacritics and special symbols and the other using a combination of digraphs and diacritics—and egos and passions were running so high that the Congress ended up having to endorse both alphabets in order to avoid ending in failure.⁸ Eventually, the latter alphabet became the standard.

At the Congress of Monastir, no one dared to address the issue of dialect choice for the standard, and in some respects that issue remains contentious to this day. The differences between the two major dialectal divisions of Albanians, the northern (Geg) and southern (Tosk), are sig-

nificantly greater than between any two dialects of any modern Slavic language, and yet the sense among Albanians that they speak the same language is strong. Very briefly, the two dialect groups are distinguished by a relatively compact bundle of isoglosses (or boundaries on a dialect map) running along or just a few kilometers south of the river Shkumbi in the middle of Albania.⁹ The division crosses the Macedonian border near Struga and then runs south along the course of the Black Drin to Lake Ohrid. From there it runs east, north of Resen and Bitola. The exact dating of the isoglosses is disputed, but they definitely postdate the Roman conquest and were in place by the medieval period.

From 1923 until c. 1952–1954, the southern Geg dialect of Elbasan was *de jure* official in Albania, but not *de facto*. After World War II literary Geg was used in Yugoslavia while a northern Tosk-based standard became official in Albania. During this period (1948–1968), Yugoslav authorities attempted to create a separate identity for the Albanian speakers of Kosovo by using *šiptarski* for the Albanian of Kosovo and its Geg-based standard and *albanski* for the language and standard of Albania.¹⁰ This attempt, however, failed, and today the uses of *šiptar* (Albanian [noun]) and *šiptarski* (Albanian [adj.]) in South Slavic languages, although derived from Albanian *Shqiptar* (Albanian), are perceived as pejorative.

In 1968, Albanian intellectuals in Yugoslavia voted to adopt the standard of Albania for the sake of unity. The definitive change took place in 1972 with a conference and resulting publication of a unified orthographic dictionary.¹¹ The brief move for a separate Kosovar—as distinct from Albanian—identity, which surfaced among some Kosovars between the 1999 NATO war and independence in 2008 (e.g., in the weekly *Žáva*), is more or less a thing of the past, although contestation over the nature of the unified standard language continues. At issue is mainly the question of the relationship of Geg features to the standard. Although a few Geg features were established in the standard during the communist period, “the unified language” (*gjuha e njësuar*) is overwhelmingly Tosk.¹² While some Geg-speaking intellectuals advocate pluricentrism or bidialectalism in the standard, and some Tosk-speaking intellectuals vigorously reject the notion of any fundamental changes, a kind of middle ground is represented by Geg intellectuals who want to “open up the standard” to Gegisms. The focus of this approach is the infinitive, a Geg grammatical feature that is both absent

from Tosk and a component in many of the grammatical differences between the two dialect groups. When I asked a colleague of mine in Kosovo why he was focusing exclusively on the infinitive as the sole Geg element that should be introduced into the standard, he replied: *Paskajorja është lokomotivi* (The infinitive is the locomotive).

On the other hand, at the 2008 recitation of “O moj Shqypni” that I attended, which took place in an enormous auditorium in Bitola that was filled to standing room only and was accompanied by bursts of spontaneous applause, there were several *hodjas* in the front rows of the audience, but no priests, and lines 27–40, as well as 66–67 were omitted. Despite the rather pointed presence of Muslim clergy, however (and, in fact, roughly 97 percent of Macedonia’s Albanian-speaking population is Muslim), the overall sense that Albanianness trumps religion still seems strong, e.g., in Kosovo, where I was doing fieldwork in the Gjakova-Prizren region in early 2011. There, Catholic nuns and Bektashi babas, sometimes related by ties of blood, continue their civilities peacefully and unhindered, explicitly happy to be free Albanians.¹³ To be sure, in Kosovo the transition from Serbian province to independent republic was violent, but, as we shall see below (§4), religion was arguably not the primary issue.

Bosnia

In contrast to speakers of Albanian, speakers of what we can call the Neo-Štokavian Dialect Complex (NSDC)—i.e., those South Slavic dialects with an historical stress retraction that speakers themselves perceive as emblematic along with a reflex of *što* for “what”—failed to create a sense of language-based unity for themselves and speakers of the more or less closely related dialects that constituted the former Serbo-Croatian.¹⁴ Moreover, Bosnia—which is unique among the four ex-Yugoslav republics where NSDC is spoken because its territory is almost entirely in the NSDC—failed to become the linguistic center of a unified language based on NSDC.¹⁵ There are, of course, many well-known reasons for these differences. Here, however, I wish to frame the issues from a comparative viewpoint.

From a strictly structural linguistic point of view, the failure of Bosnia to achieve a sense of unified identity alluded to above is all the

more striking. Albanian dialectal diversity is far greater than that within the NSDC, and moreover the NSDC remains the basis of all the standards that emerged from the former Serbo-Croatian. This has occurred despite the fact that each standard, potentially, could have drawn on some other dialect as emblematic. For Croatian, Čakavian of the Dalmatian coast could have provided the most linguistic difference and for Montenegrin, the Zeta-Lovćen dialects of the southeastern half of the country, which are Štokavian but do not have the accentual retraction. In the case of Bosnian, ikavian Neo-Štokavian (i.e., dialects where the reflex of Common Slavic *ě more or less consistently gave /i/ rather than /e/, /je/, or /ije/) could have served as the basis of a standard unlike either variant of the former Serbo-Croatian—the ekavian and (i)jekavian. For Serbian, the present policy of maintaining the current standard makes sense not only because the other three standards are all engaged in distancing themselves from the former norm, but also because, from a dialectological point of view, those dialects on Serbian territory that are most different from the current standard are closer to Macedonian and Bulgarian, just as Kajkavian Croatian is closer to Slovenian.

It could be argued that the linguistic success of the NSDC in terms of geographic spread contributed to its failure as a mobilizer of a unified ethno-national identity. To be sure, the geopolitical situations of the speakers were crucial in this failure, as were, ultimately, the subsequent manipulations by specific elites and failures of the so-called international community.¹⁶ While the more or less contiguous territory of Albanian speakers was entirely within the Ottoman Empire, speakers of the NSDC were divided between the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires, and an autonomous Serbia (1835) and independent Montenegro (1799) were established well before 1850.¹⁷ The signing by several South Slavic linguistic activists in 1850 of a literary agreement in Vienna, which set out a few broad principles for “the literary language of Serbs and Croats,” was, for a while, a symbolic moment for Serbo-Croatian comparable to what the 1908 Congress of Monastir became for Albanian.¹⁸ This document, called the “Vienna Literary Agreement” (*Bečki književen dogovor*), has been evaluated by historians as both epochal and insignificant, depending on whether they favor Serbo-Croatian unity or Croatian (and Serbian) separatism.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when Serbian and Croatian national activists were agreeing to bring Serbo-Croatian

together, Austria-Hungary (under the Treaty of Berlin in 1878) occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina and garrisoned the Sandžak of Novi Pazar (Turkish Yeni Pazar). The Sandžak was moved administratively from the Vilayet of Bosna to the Vilayet of Kosova (Üsküp) within Ottoman Turkey, and in 1908 Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina while leaving the Sandžak to Turkey. The Sandžak was subsequently partitioned between Serbia and Montenegro in 1913 under the Treaty of Bucharest.¹⁹ During the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, authorities (especially Benjamin von Kállay) attempted to create a suprarreligious Bosnian identity, as seen in the publication of Vuletić's high school grammar of the Bosnian language (*bosanski jezik*).²⁰ The move can be compared to Yugoslav authorities' attempt to create a separate identity for the Albanian speakers of Kosovo discussed earlier.²¹

In 1908, the year of the Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia, the name of the language described in Vuletić's textbook was changed to *srpsko-hrvatski*, a signal of the claims of Serbian and Croatian activists on the territory. Croatian linguistic elites have subsequently gone back and forth between unity and separatism vis-à-vis Serbian, the most recent stage—post-1971 or post-1991, depending on whether Dalibor Brozović's 1971 "Ten Theses on the Croatian Language" or Croatia's declaration of independence is counted as definitive—is separatist. The row leading up to 1971, however, was the publication of the first two volumes of the joint Serbo-Croatian/Croato-Serbian dictionary in 1967 by Matica Srpska and Matica Hrvatska. A key objection of Croatian separatists was that citations for "Croatian" words were taken from Serbian authors and "Serbian" words from Croatian authors.²²

Since the break-up of Yugoslavia, Serbian, Croatian, and Bosniak national activists have deployed standard languages as one of the means of laying claim to citizens' loyalties. The details of these activities in Bosnia need not concern us here other than to say that they continue to contribute to instability.²³ The cross-border implications of the presence of ethnic Croats and Serbs in Bosnia is fairly obvious, but less attention has been paid to Slavic-speaking Muslims outside of Bosnia, to be examined later. We should note in passing that the concepts of "ethnic" Croat and Serb are basically religious, Catholic and Orthodox, respectively. While the correlations are not 100 percent, they are so close as to render the non-correlations statistically insignificant.

Thus, for example, a Serbian colleague of mine in 1971 said to me: "My grandfather was a Croat, but he converted to Orthodoxy, so I'm a Serb."

However, the fact that many or most Eastern Orthodox churches are also national churches—the details of which history are fascinating but beyond the scope of this article—is also reflected in the specifically Serbian nature of the Serbian Orthodox church, as illustrated by the following revelatory incident. A Bulgarian colleague of mine visited Zagreb and went to the cathedral. Being religious, she crossed herself upon entering and began to pray. An old woman, noticing that my colleague had crossed herself right to left rather than left to right assumed she was a Serb and went up to her and said: "You have your own church, go pray there." My colleague, shocked, said (in Bulgarian): "Excuse me, I'm Bulgarian. I don't know where the churches are here." The old woman immediately became very friendly and said: "Oh, you're Bulgarian! Stay, stay, pray as much as you like!" This incident reveals, on the one hand, that the Serb/Croat division has a deep religious basis, but at the same time, there is an ethno-national element that is distinct from religion.

Macedonia and Bulgaria

In comparing Macedonia with Bulgaria, we can say that despite Macedonia's distinct, language-based, identity, it actually followed similar policies to Bulgaria's in alienating its Muslim speakers. Bulgarian policies toward its Muslims assumed that those who spoke Bulgarian were Bulgarians (and, from a religious point of view, "apostates").²⁴ Already in the nineteenth century, however, Bulgarian-speaking Muslims considered the term "*bălgarski*" (Bulgarian) to refer to Christians, and Pomak (Bulgarian-speaking Muslim) songs from that period preserved today in Turkey still make it clear that Bulgarians were by definition not Muslim.²⁵ After World War II the Bulgarian communist state did an especially effective job of alienating its Muslim citizens, culminating in the persecutions and migrations of the 1980s.²⁶

By contrast, according to my consultants who were present for these events, the Torbeš (Macedonian-speaking Muslims), suffered considerably under the Bulgarian occupation of most of Macedonia

during World War II and they were therefore sympathetic to Tito's Partisans, in effect siding with Macedonian-speaking Christians (or, officially, atheists). The first issue of *Nova Makedonija*, which became the main party newspaper in the People's (later Socialist) Republic of Macedonia, was published in what was then the Torbeš village of Gorno Vranovci in the Veles region on 29 October 1944.²⁷ One of my Macedonian non-Muslim consultants, who was not a member of the Communist Party, attributed the subsequent alienation of the Torbeš to the rash implementation of the 1950 Yugoslav law banning certain items of traditional Muslim women's clothing: the *zar* (face veil) and *feredže* (head and upper-body covering). Women reported weeping and refusing to leave the house for a year out of shame.

While the banning of the *zar* and *feredže* was done in the name of communism and progress during the mid-twentieth century, the alienation was furthered by the Macedonian Orthodox Church after the so-called fall of communism. In an interview that I conducted in 1994 with His Blessedness Archbishop Gospodin Gospodin Mihailo, head (*poglavar*) of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, the cleric explained to me that the Church viewed Macedonian-speaking Muslims as "lost sheep" that they hoped would return someday to the fold. He blamed the alienation of Macedonian-speaking Muslims on Serbian policies during the first Yugoslavia, when there was pressure on them to assimilate as Serbs. However, the composed folk song with the line "*narode makedonski, narode risjanski*" (O Macedonian nation, O Christian nation) that was played over and over on state Radio-Television during 2008–2009 is illustrative of a more aggressive lining up of Christianity with Macedonian identity.

While Macedonian Christians tend to view the Macedonian Orthodox Church as important to their identity, the Church also undermines Macedonian as an ethno-linguistic identity by alienating Macedonian-speaking Muslims. Interestingly enough, the formerly ultranationalist Macedonian politician Ljupcho Georgievski attempted to make a comeback in early 2011 by giving an interview in which he disavowed his earlier nationalism, saying that in his youth he had been mistaken. He criticized the role of the Macedonian Orthodox Church in its interference in the Macedonian government, and he made explicit reference to the success of Albanians in creating an ethno-national identity based on language. For the most part, the ruling party ignored

him, except for an online reaction headlined “Ljupcho Wants to Turn Macedonia into Albania.”²⁸

Bosniaks beyond Bosnia

In addition to the Pomaks and Torbeš mentioned above, we should also mention the Gorans of southwesternmost Kosovo and adjacent villages in Albania, as well as the Muslims of the Sandžak. Each of these groups has a distinct relationship to language, which may or may not be influenced by religion.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Muslim population of the Sandžak was mixed Slavic and Albanian speaking. Albanian speakers gradually migrated or were moved to Kosovo and Macedonia, leaving only Slavic speakers (except in a southeast corner of the Sandžak that ended up as part of Kosovo). The Sandžak dialects of the former Serbo-Croatian represent a continuation of those of Montenegro, i.e., the northern ones are part of the same NSDC as the northwestern half of Montenegro and adjacent parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, while the southern part goes with the Zeta-Lovćen group. Although in the 1990s there were reports of a movement to create a Sandžaklian language in response to the break-up of Serbo-Croatian, the Sandžak Muslims have come to identify as Bosniak and accept Bosnian.

The Muslim, Slavic-speaking Gorans of southwesternmost Kosovo and some adjacent villages in Albania are in a different position. Here ties of faith are negated by differences in language. In 2002, three years after the NATO war, when I visited Kukuljane—the Goran village closest to Dragash, which is the Kosovo district’s largest town—pro-Milošević graffiti was still to be discerned, albeit attempts were made to hide them from outsiders. Further up in Gora, in Brod, which is one of the largest Kosovo Goran villages and is quite close to both the Macedonian and Albanian borders, there are two mosques: one for Gorans and one for Albanians. Clearly, religion is not the point when it comes to identity in this region. During the 1999 NATO war, the Gorans of Brod fled south to Macedonia, while the Albanians of Brod fled west to Albania. One Albanian in Brod that I spoke with claimed that the Gorans cooperated with the Serbs during that war, and it is clear from many sources that interethnic tensions still run high.

The classification of the Slavic dialects of Gora as Macedonian rather than Serbian, on the basis of a variety of salient, relatively archaic innovations shared with most of western Macedonia—fixed antepenultimate stress, tripartite postposed definite articles, a perfect using the auxiliary *ima* (have) plus neuter verbal adjective, etc.—was proposed by Vidoeski and accepted by Ivić.²⁹ After World War II the linguistic border between Macedonian and Serbian was defined as the political border between the two republics. Bulgarian claims on Macedonian during this period excluded Gora. When Yugoslav linguists acknowledged Goran dialects as part of Macedonian rather than Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian linguists began claiming these same dialects as Bulgarian. Many of the speakers themselves have traditionally identified as neither Serbian nor Macedonian but rather as Goran, although upwardly mobile Gorans most frequently went to Macedonia, where they were called Torbeš, like other Macedonian-speaking Muslims. They find Standard Macedonian easier to understand than Standard Serbian and share salient folklore with Macedonians rather than Serbs.³⁰ When Serbian negotiators finally recognized the existing border between Macedonia and what was then still the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (including Kosovo) in February 2001, after almost a decade of foot-dragging, a group of Gorans sought inclusion in Macedonia or special status with dual citizenship and Macedonian schools.³¹ The compromise was to agree to establish a new border crossing at Restelica-Stražimer.³²

Since the independence of Kosovo in 2008, however, Gorans have been under increasing pressure to identify as Bosniaks, and Bosnian is now taught in schools in Gora. Meanwhile, the Goran villages in Albania still have only Albanian-language schools, and some still identify their language as Macedonian. In Macedonia, too, Torbeš are under increasing pressure to identify as Bosniak, in part owing to the elimination, after the 1994 census, of ethno-national category *Musliman* (Muslim) (itself a remnant of the Yugoslav period, 1961–1991). Even in 1994, when I was working for the United Nations in Macedonia, I heard reports of pressure exerted by Bosniak activists on the Torbeš to identify as Bosniak during the 1994 census. Thus, while there were 6,829 self-declared Bosniaks in Macedonia in 1994, the number jumped to 17,018 in 2002.³³

However, also in Macedonia, on 1 January 2011, a new Torbeš political party was founded, and its declaration was promulgated on 1

August in Struga.³⁴ The party has made explicit overtures to Gorans, Pomaks, and even Gjupci. The Gjupci of Macedonia and Kosovo are speakers of non-Romani languages who are of Romani-speaking origin, which their name, cognate with English *Gypsy*, implies. The majority of Gjupci in Macedonia is Muslim and speaks Albanian, although some are Christians and speak Macedonian. Another Albanian-speaking group of Romani origin, the Ashkali of Kosovo, are Albanian-speaking Muslims, while in Bulgaria there are Turkish-speaking Muslims of Romani origin who use the name Millet (Turkish for “nation”).³⁵

Today some Gjupci also go by the name Egipkjani/Egipcani (Egyptian) and claim to be of Egyptian origin. When I first met Gjupci in Macedonia in 1972, they told me “*Nie sme Gjupci. Ne znaeme od kaj sme.*” (We are Gjupci. We do not know where we are from.) They firmly denied any connection with Romani-speaking Cigani.³⁶ It was only subsequent to this time that the name Egyptian and idea of Egyptian origin became current. According to this version of history, the Gjupci are descended from Egyptians brought to Macedonia by Alexander the Great. (Some Romani speakers also have adopted this myth for themselves.) This story ties in the Macedonian concept of *antiquitization* according to which Modern Macedonian is not a Slavic language but rather a direct descendant of Ancient Macedonian, an Indo-European language whose lexical attestations leave us uncertain as to its provenance, but one which was definitely not Slavic and arguably not Hellenic.³⁷

Greece

The mention of Hellenic brings us to Greece, the southern neighbor of Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Albania, which shares cross-border populations with all three of its northern neighbors. Owing to the circumstances of the treaties that ended the Second Balkan War (1913), World War I (1919), the Greco-Turkish War (1923), and World War II (1945) as well as the consequences of the end of the Greek Civil War (1949), the northern swathe of territory controlled by the Hellenic Republic on and off for over a century is one where the majority of the population—except along its southern edges—was not Greek speaking a century ago. Today it is, thanks to expulsions, “free” migration, and aggressive hellenization policies. In each of the three traditional regions, however, i.e., Epirus,

Macedonia, and Thrace (the 2011 administrative divisions have broken these regions up in a manner reminiscent of the Banovinas of the first Yugoslavia), minority populations survive under very different conditions.

In September 2000, as tensions were building in the Republic of Macedonia, I attended a meeting sponsored by the US government at which a government employee expressed the opinion that the rest of the Balkans should be like Greece, which had no interethnic problems. Said employee was unaware of the mandatory exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey that resulted in the extirpation of Muslims precisely and—with the exception of Athens and a few other towns—mostly from Greek Macedonia. The Albanian-speaking Muslim Çams of Epirus already had a sufficiently developed Albanian national consciousness that, despite their Muslim religion, they were able to convince the Powers that they were not “Turks” and should be exempt. Meanwhile, the Muslims of Greek Thrace were exempt in return for allowing the Greek Orthodox of Istanbul to remain.³⁸

In Epirus, those Aromanian speakers that did not leave for Romania are Greek identified, and it is rare to find anyone under forty who is an active speaker of Aromanian. Likewise, the local Albanian dialects have been driven to the brink of extinction. The Çams were expelled in the wake of the Civil War of the late 1940s, and Albanian speakers in Christian villages are hellenized.³⁹ In 2012, however, there was a campaign in Albania directed at raising consciousness of the fact that Epirus, known in Albanian as Çamëria, had been home to a large Albanian-speaking population, as evident in graffiti all over central Tirana at that time (See Plate 7.1).⁴⁰

Pomak linguistic separatism in Greece is yet another aspect of the complex relationship of language to religion. The idea of a Pomak language is resisted by both Bulgarian Christian authorities in Bulgaria and Turkish Muslim authorities in Greece for what is at base the same reason: the diminution of claims on the population of speakers. Pomaks are concentrated largely, albeit not exclusively, in the Rhodope Mountains on both sides of the Greek–Bulgarian border.⁴¹ In Bulgaria, their dialects do not differ significantly from those of their Christian neighbors and are considered to be part of the Bulgarian language. In Greece, Christian speakers of these dialects either migrated to Bulgaria or hellenized, so that the remaining speakers are all Muslims.⁴² Mitrinov makes the point that the Pomak dialects on the Greek side



Plate 7.1. Graffiti from Tirana, November 2012

have been more conservative owing to the absence of influence from standard Bulgarian, and that items considered typical Pomak features in Greece are used by both Muslims and Christians on the Bulgarian side of the Rhodopes.⁴³ Greek authorities have encouraged the publication of textbooks in Pomak and the teaching of Pomak in schools.⁴⁴ This is strongly resisted by Turkish authorities, who control Muslim education in Greece.⁴⁵ According to my consultants, villagers sending their children to Pomak-language schools were threatened with ostracism by Turkish-speaking authorities in Thrace.⁴⁶ In Greece, we have the irony of authorities encouraging a minority Slavic language in one part of their territory, namely Thrace, while attempting to stamp out the Macedonian dialects among the Christians of Greek Macedonia.⁴⁷

On this last point, a recent example of Greece's ongoing campaign to destroy the identity of its ethnic Macedonian minority was occasioned by the launch of the first Modern Macedonian–Modern Greek dictionary to be published in Greece. The launch took place in Florina (Macedonian Lerin) on 17 September 2011. The publication was funded by the EU, and it was only the presence of representatives of EU organizations that enabled the launch to take place without major incident. I was invited to the launch and crossed the border by car with

Slavko Mangovski, a Macedonian journalist. At the Greek border, they took away our passports and held us there for an hour. Slavko had a small video camera, and the Greek authorities told him neither he nor the camera could enter Greece. Apparently Slavko called the organizers in Lerin, who called EU representatives in Athens, who eventually put the necessary pressure on central authorities to let us in. When we arrived in Lerin, we saw a busload of black-shirted fascist thugs from the political party Hrisi Avgi (Golden Dawn)—the same group that assaulted me in Athens on 2 June 2009 at the launch of the first Modern Greek–Macedonian dictionary published in Greece—getting off and heading for the hotel where the launch was to take place.

When we arrived at the hotel, it was surrounded by riot police, plainclothesmen, and paddy wagons. The atmosphere was tense and threatening. Shortly thereafter the Hrisi Avgi thugs massed at one end of the street shouting “*Makedhonia einai elliniki!*” (Macedonia is Greek!). Fortunately, the presence of EU observers inhibited further collusion between the Greek police and the Hrisi Avgi thugs. That night Macedonian songs and dances were performed in public in Lerin for the first time since the 1920s, at a restaurant just inside the town limits, but the hotel where the book launch was to take place the next day remained staked out by police all night long, creating an atmosphere of insecurity. By morning the police and their allies had withdrawn far enough from the hotel that the book launch took place without further incident.

Meanwhile, on a grassroots level Greeks are welcomed in nearby Bitola, in Macedonia, with signs in Greek advertising dentists, hair salons, grocery stores, car washes, and all the other day-to-day amenities that have become so expensive in Greece that those near the border with Macedonia find it cheaper to do their shopping there. And apparently they are not subjected to the harassment that we experienced.

Today one hears complaints that Pomaks are shifting to Turkish, which is definitely the case in Greece, and it is also the case among Muslim Roms in both Greece and Bulgaria, where social integration is being accompanied by shift to Turkish on the basis of religion. That this shift is not a new phenomenon is shown by the so-called Millet mentioned previously.⁴⁸ In each of these cases, the group has also created an origin myth not unlike the Turkish claim to the Hittites, the Bulgarian claim to the Thracians, or the Modern Macedonian claim to the Ancient Macedonians, and so on. For the Millet, it is the

early medieval Pechenegs. Here the Greeks and Albanians are allowed to make their myths more or less unchallenged, although the Greeks called themselves Romans (*Romaioi*) for over a thousand years, and Modern Albanian identity, like Modern Greek, Modern Macedonian, Modern Bulgarian, Modern Romanian, and most other “modern” identities is in fact a nineteenth-century product, as Pashko Vasa’s poem makes clear. Here we can note the importance of social scientists such as Herzfeld, among many others, who make clear the nineteenth-century mythic origins of the current international system—both political and mythical. The myth of forced conversions to Islam in the Balkans, discussed earlier in this volume, is another example.⁴⁹

Conclusion

Returning for a moment to the present, a cynic would argue that Macedonia is a failed Bulgaria, since Bulgaria managed to get into the EU while Macedonia continues to be besieged and beleaguered on all sides in different ways, adding fuel to fires lit by homegrown nationalists.⁵⁰ While Serbian claims to church properties and Albanian claims to territorial autonomy are both worrying in terms of straightforward security, it is the Bulgarian and Greek activities that leave Macedonia most vulnerable to the manipulation of local nationalists, and this is at least in part since both of these latter threats to Macedonian language and identity operate with the impunity of that great European club of which Macedonia is unlikely to ever become a member. If the tables were turned and Macedonia were in the EU and Bulgaria left out, and if Macedonia instituted a version of Bulgarian practice by granting Macedonian passports to anyone with a Slavic-speaking ancestor born in one of the three Ottoman Macedonian *vilâyet*s (Manâstir, Selânik, Üsküp/Kosova), how many Bulgarians would rush to the border or embassy to claim the right to travel to “Europe” by declaring another country’s nationality/ethnicity? One is reminded of Heinrich Heine’s wry observation on nineteenth-century Western Europe’s pressure on Jews to be baptized as Christians: “that is merely water, and dries up rapidly.”⁵¹ Bulgaria sends “urgent anthropologists” (*spešni antropolozi*) into Eastern Macedonia to “demonstrate” the weakness of Macedonian national feeling.⁵² Bulgarian diplomats travel to Vrbnik, Golobrd, and

and Gora to recruit Bulgarians by offering scholarships and upward mobility to the Macedonian speakers there.⁵³ Interestingly, the Bulgarian state has been much more cautious about its southern neighbor. Bulgaria's linguists express outrage at the encouragement of a separate Pomak language in Greek Thrace, but no Bulgarian diplomat offers Bulgarian scholarships to Pomaks in Greece. There are certainly Bulgarian-identified and Greek-identified Macedonian-speaking Christians in some of the villages of Aegean Macedonia. But in much of Greek Macedonia, many people who still speak Macedonian have a Macedonian identity when they are able to—and not afraid to—express it.

In both Bosnia and Kosovo, nationalists who identified with groups in other polities saw to it that the respective projects ("*bosanski*" and "*šiptarski*") failed, but with opposite results. In the Bosnian case, as seen above, forces identified with Serbia and a would-be Croatia, or a more general Yugoslav idea scuttled Austria-Hungary's Bosnian project. Later, in the period 1968–1972, as Croatian linguistic elites were militating desperately against unity with Serbian, Kosovar Albanian elites were doing just the opposite, as seen above.

An important point to make about these developments is that what they represent is neither "ancient" nor "ethnic"; rather it is "nineteenth century" (or "twentieth century") and "political." Brubaker's concept of "groupness" as an event that occurs rather than an essence that is constructed is useful here.⁵⁴ Language mobilization as a unifying or disunifying factor can be viewed as a kind of groupness in Brubaker's sense: sometimes it occurs, and at other times it does not. It could be argued that precisely the relative lateness of Albanian ethno-linguistic mobilization and its location within a single polity (the Ottoman Empire) were crucial factors in the occurrence of Albanian "groupness." We can argue that in the Albanian case, the millet system, according to which all Muslims were Turks, actually favored the attempts of Albanian national activists to construct a language-based identity, since these activists were faced with a Muslim majority among their speakers, and, in the context of the Ottoman Empire, religious identity was antithetical to a language-based one. Such was not the case for speakers of various Slavic dialects, which have coalesced into various standard languages along Christian lines—except in Bosnia, where activists now attempt to use religion to co-opt dialects that are in fact closer to the dialect bases of other standard languages.

What I have hoped to show in this brief exposition is that, on the one hand, Islam in the Balkans can best be understood in its complex relationship to sources of identity other than religion, especially language, to which it is at times subordinate and at times superordinate. At the same time, when we take as our points of comparison Bulgaria and Bosnia, which, like every other Balkan state except Croatia and Slovenia (the latter according to some is not Balkan, although in the 1923 supplement to the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, parts of it were called Balkanic Italy) have significant numbers of indigenous Muslims (at least in some regions), we see that new challenges are often embedded in previous historical continuities. As for the responsibilities of the humanities and social sciences, it should be remembered that academics—often in cooperation with states—have a significant history in participating in national and supranational projects. The treaties of 1878 made explicit use of maps drawn by linguists.⁵⁵ It is difficult indeed for careful academics to counter harmful narratives effectively. Nonetheless, although talking to each other is vital in formulating and clarifying ideas, engaging practitioners, and even the broader public, is at times both possible and necessary.

NOTES

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- 2 In this context, “indigenous Islam” refers to Islam with a history in the region for centuries prior to the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924.
 - 3 Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations.” *Foreign Affairs* 72.3 (1993), 22–49.
 - 4 Robert Elsie, *History of Albanian Literature*, vol. 1 (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1995), 262.
 - 5 See Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening, 1878–1912* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).
 - 6 My English translation is based on Elsie’s, but I have taken some small liberties in my version in order to give a sense of the rhythm and rhyme of the original.
 - 7 The number of Çams currently in Epirus is impossible to determine, given Greek census practices, but there are some Albanian-speaking Christian villages in parts of Greece bordering Albania.
 - 8 Skendi, *The Albanian*, 370–376; Mahir Domi et al., eds., *Alfabeti i gjuhës shqipe dhe Kongresi i Manastirit* (Tirana: Universiteti i Tiranës, 1972); Shaban Demiraj and Kristaq Prifti, *Kongresi i Manastirit* (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, 2004).
 - 9 An isogloss is a boundary on a dialect map. Thus, for example, the River Shkumbi marks the northern border of the region where, under certain conditions, original /n/ becomes /r/ (a typical Tosk feature), so the isogloss for this feature is said to coincide with the river.
 - 10 Mehdi Bardhi, *Učimo šiptarski: priručnik za učenike V i VI razreda osnovne škole sa srpskohrvatskim nastavnim jezikom* (Belgrade: Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika Socijalističke Republike Srbije, 1963).
 - 11 For details, see Victor A. Friedman, “Language Planning and Status in the Republic of Macedonia and in Kosovo,” in *Language in the Former Yugoslav Lands*, ed. Ranko Bugarski and Celia Hawkesworth (Bloomington: Slavica, 2004), 197–231. See also Mehmet Çeliku, “Probleme të diskutueshme rreth ‘Drejtshkimit të gjuhës shqipe’ të vitit 1973,” in *Seminari XVII ndërkomëtar për gjuhën, letërsinë dhe kulturën shqiptare: Përmbledhje e ligjeratëve, referimeve, kumtesave dhe e diskutimeve* (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, 1995), 215–219.
 - 12 See Janet Byron, *Selection among Alternates in Language Standardization: The Case of Albanian* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976).

- 13 Intra-Albanian tensions were higher during the 1990s. In 1996, a Catholic Albanian friend of mine from Kosovo who wore a golden crucifix complained that people on the street would come up to him and say “*Hiqe kryqin apo shko në Zagreb*” (Take off the cross or go to Zagreb).
- 14 The various dialects that are considered part of Štokavian but that do not have the Neo-Štokavian acute (Zeta-Lovćen, Prizren-Timok, some Slavonian, etc.) together with the more distantly related Čakavian and Kajkavian (based on emblematic *ča* and *kaj* [what]), both spoken exclusively in Croatia, with Kajkavian being a transition to Slovene) combined with the NSDC to constitute the former Serbo-Croatian.
- 15 The complexities of the Neo-Štokavian acute are treated in great detail in Pavle Ivić, *Die Serbokroatischen Dialekte* (The Hague: Mouton, 1958). For an overview of the dialectology of the former Serbo-Croatian, see Dalibor Brozović and Pavle Ivić, *Jeziik, srpskohrvatski/hrvatskosrpski, hrvatski ili srpski* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod “Miroslav Krleža,” 1988).
- 16 V. P. Gagnon, Jr., *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), and Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995).
- 17 Both countries, along with Romania, did not achieve internationally recognized, full independence until the Treaty of Berlin in 1878.
- 18 Kenneth E. Naylor, “Serbo-Croatian,” in *The Slavic Literary Languages*, ed. Alexander and Edward Stankiewicz (New Haven: Yale Concilium on International Studies, 1980), 65–83. It is worth noting that into the nineteenth century, South Slavic was conceived of as “Illyrian” and Albanian as “Epirotic” based on classical toponymy rather than linguistic connection. The later claim of Albanian to Ancient Illyrian was crucial in formulating a national mythology. On pan-South Slavic Illyrian movements, see Micaela Iovine, “The ‘Illyrian language’ and the Language Question among the Southern Slavs,” in *Aspects of the Slavic Language Question*, vol. 1, ed. Riccardo Picchio and Harvey Goldblatt (New Haven: Yale Concilium on International and Area Studies, 1984), 101–156.
- 19 Throughout this paper, the “Sandžak” will refer to the territory of the Ottoman Sandžak of Yeni Pazar. Since its partition and then absorption into Yugoslavia, the term “Sandžak” has sometimes been used to refer to a subset of this territory, but these later conceptions are irrelevant to this article.
- 20 Frane Vuletić, *Gramatika bosanskoga jezika za srednje škole* (Sarajevo: Zemaljska vlada za Bosnu i Hercegovinu, 1890; 2nd ed. 1898; 3rd ed. 1903).
- 21 See Hajdarpasic (this volume) for more on the creation of a Bosnian identity and Miller (this volume) for former Yugoslav approaches to the problem.

- 22 Damir Kalogjera, "Misunderstandings about the Role of a Monolingual Dictionary," in *Lexical Norm and National Languages*, ed. R. Lučić (Munich: Otto Sagner, 2002), 111–119.
- 23 According to The Economist Unit, the Risk of Social Unrest in 2014 on a five-division scale from Very Low to Very High, the chance of social unrest in Bosnia was Very High, as it was also in Greece. It was ranked High in Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, and Turkey, and Medium in Serbia. Montenegro and Kosovo were not included in the assessment (*The World in 2014*, 80).
- 24 See Antov (this volume) on the development of Islam in Bulgaria, and elsewhere in the Balkans, during the early and middle Ottoman period and Dragostinova (this volume) on the development of Bulgarian classifications of nationality.
- 25 *Pomak Göçmenlerde Müzik ve Pesna* (Istanbul: Kalan Arşiv Seriesi, 1998).
- 26 Mary Neuburger, *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).
- 27 In 1900, the village of 244 people was entirely Macedonian Muslim (Vasil Kănčov, *Makedonija: etnografija i statistika* (Sofia: Bălgarsko knižovno društvo, 1900), 213. In 2002, the village was almost entirely Albanian speaking with 4 people declaring Macedonian and 6 Turkish as their mother tongue out of a total of 199 (Statistical Office of Macedonia. *Popis na naselenieto, domakijinstva i stanovite vo Republika Makedonija 2002*, kn. 10. Skopje: Republički zavod za statistika, 2002).
- 28 Field notes and interview with Ljupcho Georgievski, 6 March 2011, available at <http://www.makdenes.org/content/article/2328612.html>.
- 29 Pavle Ivić, *Dijalektologija srpskohrvatskog jezika* 2nd ed. (Novi Sad: Matica Srpska, 1985); Božidar Vidoeski, "Fonološkiot sistem na s. Mlike," *Zbornik za filologiju i lingvistiku* 27/28 (1984/1985), 127–137, and "Goranskiot govor," *Prilozi, Makedonska Akademija na Naukite i Umetnostite, Oddelenie za lingvistika i literaturna nauka* 11.2 (1986), 45–76.
- 30 This was reported by Naim Dokle, personal communication, Tirana, 1995; it was also attested in Letters to the Editor published in *Nova Makedonija*, 18 and 25 January 1986, p. 2.
- 31 Cited in MILS (Macedonian Information Liaison Service, electronic news bulletin), 13 February 2001.
- 32 This was reported in MILS, 16 February 2001.
- 33 Victor A. Friedman, *Makedonski Studii II* (Skopje: MANU, 2014).
- 34 Šerif Ajradinoski, *Torbeška deklaracija* (Struga: Rumelija, Torbeški kulturno naučen centar, 2011), <http://www.podgorci.info/torbeska%20deklaracija.pdf>.
- 35 Elena Marushiakova et al., *Identity Formation among Minorities in the Balkans: The Cases of Roma, Egyptians and Ashkali in Kosovo* (Sofia: Studii Romani, 2001).

- 36 Gordon Messing, "Tsinganos and Yiftos: Some Speculations on the Greek Gypsies." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 7 (1981), 155–167.
- 37 See Petar Ilievski, "The Position of the Ancient Macedonian Language and the Modern Name Makedonski." *Balkanistika* 10 (1997), 227–240.
- 38 Stephen Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York: Macmillan, 1932).
- 39 There is, of course, the economic influx of Albanians from Albania since the so-called fall of communism, but this is a different population.
- 40 Greek nationalists continue to claim southern Albania as "Northern Epirus" and worry about the linguistic rights of Greek speakers in Albania. Nonetheless, they show no inclination whatsoever to grant similar rights to Albanian speakers in Greece. Thus, for example, bilingual Greek/Albanian signs are commonplace in southern Albania, whereas no such public signage exists—nor has it ever existed—in Greece. See especially Skendi, *The Albanian*, on the relationship between the Greek and Albanian Orthodox Churches, the former being deeply implicated in Greek nationalist policies.
- 41 As already indicated above, the term "Pomak" is used for Slavic-speaking Muslims throughout Bulgaria, and in the nineteenth century was also used in Eastern Macedonia (see, for example, Marko Cepenkov, "Makedonski narodni umotvorbi," in *VI: Narodni prikazni*, ed. Kiril Penušliski (Skopje: Makedonska Kniga, 1972).
- 42 Cf. Hr. Kodov, *Ezikāt na trakijskite bālgari* (Sofia: Trakijskijāt Naučen Institute, 1935); Todor Bojadžiev, *Bālgarskite govori v zapadna (belo-morska) i iztočna (odrinska) Trakija* (Sofia: Universitet "Kliment Ohridski," 1991). To the best of my knowledge, the only Christian Slavic speakers in Greece who identify as "Bulgarian" speak dialects that can be classed as Macedonian, as opposed to Thracian Slavic, which everyone agrees is Bulgarian (if the speakers are Christian).
- 43 Georgi Mitrinov, "The Dialect Situation in the Rhodopes," in *The Pomaks in Greece and Bulgaria: A Model Case for Borderland Minorities in the Balkans*, ed. Klaus Steinke and Christian Voss (Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner/Südoosteuropa Gesellschaft, 2007), 149–159.
- 44 Nikolaos Kokkas, "Tradition vs. Change in the Orality of Pomaks in Western Thrace: The Role of Folklore in Determining Pomak Identity," in *The Pomaks in Greece and Bulgaria*, 74–114.
- 45 All citizens of Greece are "Greeks" according to Greece's treatment of its minorities, and thus the Turkish speakers of Greece are not Turks but Muslim Greeks. The Greek journal *Elliniki Dialektologia* (in vol. 5, 1996–1998) even went so far as to refer to the Turkish dialects of Greece as *Mousoulmaniká Thrákēs* (Muslimish of Thrace).

- 46 Nikolaos Kokkas, "Tradition vs. Change," passim; Fotini Tsibiridou, "Silence" as an Idiom of Marginality among Greek Pomaks," in *The Pomaks in Greece and Bulgaria*, 49–73.
- 47 Dēmētrēs Lithoksoou, *Ellēnikos antimakedonikos agōnas* [The Greek anti-Macedonian struggle] (Athens: Megalē Poreia, 1998); Tasos Kōstopoulos, *Ē Apogogeumenē Glōssa* (Athens: Maurē Lista, 2000).
- 48 Elena Marushiakova et al., *Identity Formation among Minorities in the Balkans: The Cases of Roma, Egyptians and Ashkali in Kosovo* (Sofia: Studii Romani, 2001).
- 49 Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (Austin: University of Texas, 1982), and *Anthropology through the Looking Glass: Critical Ethnography in the Margins of Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1987). On conversion to Islam in the Balkans, see Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University, 2011).
- 50 Victor A. Friedman, "Introduction to 'Challenging Crossroads: Macedonia in Global Perspective.'" *Slavic Review* 69.4 (2010), 811–815.
- 51 Isidor Singer and Cyrus Adler, eds., *The Jewish Encyclopedia, Volume 6* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1906), 330.
- 52 Tchavdar Marinov, "Kak se pravi spešna antropologija: Po povod knjigata na Petăr-Emil Mitev, Antonina Željazkova, i Goran Stojkovski *Makedonija na krăstopăt*." *Kultura* 3 (2530), 23 January 2009, <http://www.kultura.bg/bg/article/view/15149>.
- 53 Given these circumstances, Bulgarian denial the existence of its own Macedonian minority comes as no surprise. See Gigova (this volume) on Bulgarian relations with Macedonian language, identity, and the minority in Bulgaria.
- 54 Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
- 55 E. Hertslet, *The Map of Europe by Treaty*, Volume 4 (1875–1891) (London: Harrison, 1891).

CHAPTER 8

Women between State and Mosque: Compliance or Agency?

Yana Hashamova

In the last two decades, women's experiences in the Balkans, caught between state and religious ideologies, have generated increased academic investigations and feminist activism. This presentation examines Bulgarian Muslim and Bosnian women's subjugation to state regulations and religious norms, as well as their physical victimization in the recent ethnic and religious clashes in Bulgaria in the 1980s and Bosnia in the 1990s. Employing historical and anthropological research, and analysis of cultural depictions of women's experiences, I contend that although the pressure upon women to fit into state or religious ideologies frames them into a discourse created by and for others in a context of exclusion and repression (to evoke Michel Foucault's theory of sex as a political category), cultural representations often construct counter-discourses and counter-identifications, which assert women's agency.

Social Realities—Bulgaria

As Maria Todorova contends, interactions between various ethnic and religious communities in the Balkans have been defined mainly by the legacy of the Ottoman Empire.¹ She argues that according to one perspective, the Ottoman legacy is viewed as a "radically alien imposition on autochthonous Christian medieval societies."² The other, she continues, lies in the understanding that several centuries of coexistence

cannot but have produced a “common legacy, and that the history of the Ottoman state is the history of all its constituent populations.”³ In Bulgaria, the impact of the Ottoman legacy is experienced on political, economic, and cultural levels, as well as along the ethnic and religious gamut of the present population. This chapter examines not so much the Ottoman but the effect of the Bulgarian socialist legacy as well as the most recent emergence of conservative Islam in certain regions of Bulgaria and its impact on the lives of Muslim women. According to the Bulgarian Statistical Institute, the 2011 census estimates that the Bulgarian population amounts to approximately 7.4 million, of which 51.3 percent are women and 48.7 percent men. The data also shows 8.8 percent Turkish minorities, 9.1 percent Turkish-speaking minorities (with “mother tongue” as identifying factor), as well as 77.9 percent Christians, 9.5 percent Sunnis, 0.5 percent Shiites, and 0.1 percent Muslims.⁴

While ethnic and religious identifications were only two of fifteen other criteria found in the census, the individual’s belonging to ethnic, religious, or familial communities achieves a greater significance. A recent study of Dutch and Bulgarian scholars (presented at the Cross-Cultural Psychology Conference in Istanbul, July 2011) concludes that Bulgarian identity is stronger for Bulgarian versus Muslim Bulgarian and Turkish youth, whereas religious identity is stronger for Turkish and Muslim Bulgarians versus mainstream Bulgarians.⁵ Their second finding claims that there is a positive relationship between collective identity and well-being, and older youth has higher levels of ethnic Bulgarian and Islamic religious identities.⁶ The recent census and these conclusions indicate that in addition to the different criteria for identifications (religion, mother tongue, ethnicity), ethnic and religious identifications of Bulgarians (and Christian Bulgarians) and Muslims (Turks and Bulgarian-speaking Muslims) follow different traditions, religious in the case of Muslim minorities and national in the case of mainstream Bulgarians.⁷

As the Bulgarian state pursues its political agenda and local communities follow their own interests, at times divergent from the state ones, women’s identity and existence are caught between local traditions and state institutions and the way their power relations are played out on women’s bodies and lives. The overall condition of women’s participation in local and state institutions as well as leading business

companies in Bulgaria does not differ much from women's representation in Central and Western European countries. The Global Gender Gap report of 2009 ranks Bulgaria in 38th place, among such countries as Lithuania (30th), Belgium (33rd), Estonia (37th), Austria (42nd), Portugal (46th), and Poland (50th).⁸ In the most recent years, women have achieved solid positions in state institutions. For example, women constitute 21 percent of the 41st Bulgarian Parliament, of which 20.2 percent are Bulgarian women and 0.8 percent Turkish Bulgarians. Ethnically, 10.8 percent of Bulgarian parliamentarians are Turkish Bulgarians, a rather proportionate representation. Considering that it is the right and responsibility of each party to design their lists of representatives, such meager female representation of Turkish Bulgarian women is an interesting question but its discussion falls beyond the scope of this paper.⁹

According to Tatyana Kmetova, director of the Center of Women's Studies and Policies in Sofia, a possible explanation for the relatively better integration of Bulgarian women in politics is the socialist past, which supported and insisted on women's employment. At the end of the 1970s, Bulgaria claims to have achieved one of the highest women's employment numbers in the world.¹⁰

Such opinion reveals the double bind of women's equality to state policies, especially during socialism: on the one hand, women were granted equal rights but, on the other, they were also forced to perform according to state (usually male) expectations, standards, and agendas. While state socialism might have liberated women, it simultaneously imposed moral values and behavioral (dress) codes. These regulations were particularly painful when applied to Muslim Bulgarian women. Mary Neuburger contends that in the name of "emancipation" and "modernity," Bulgarian national projects sought to unveil Turkish and Bulgarian Muslim women.¹¹ These practices illustrate well Michel Foucault's notion of a "disciplinary regime," through which one's behavior and body are subjected to a series of rules and regulations.¹² Foucault, however, is concerned with describing disciplinary control as much as he is interested in charting the possible forms of resistance to control. Instead of seeing women's relationship to power as simply a site of compliance, he suggests that it is possible to construct what he calls "counter-discourses" and "counter-identifications." In concluding her study on the Muslim women in Bulgaria and their "de-veiling," Neu-

burger states: “Muslim women, through sustained refusal to de-veil or through deliberate re-veiling, transformed the veil (and also *shalvari*) into an ‘armory’ of protest against state-defined emancipation and imposed modernity.”¹³

Remarkably similar are Kristen Ghodsee’s most recent findings in her work on Muslim women in Madan and Rudozem, analogous in the way Muslim women are again subjected to a “disciplinary regime,” albeit by a different ideology and institution. Mostly ethnic Bulgarian Muslims inhabit this region which, in the past couple of decades, received financial support from Middle Eastern states, support that assisted in building new mosques and religious schools introducing Islamic teachings from the Middle East unlike what Friedman in this volume calls “indigenous Islam” with a history in the region. While Ghodsee observes that the emergence of foreign (Middle Eastern) Islam in the region of the eastern Rhodope Mountains and particularly the new conservative dress code (*arabski stil*) is empowering local Muslim women, I raise the question whether this traditional Muslim dress code for women, mostly imported from the Middle East, can be considered to be different from the similar “disciplinary regime” that held sway during socialism. She points out that the new “Arab” style (predominantly *hijab*) is advocated in the name of women’s moral virtue, “liberating” them from men’s lustful desires and gazes, and differentiating them from the objectification of secular Bulgarian young women in their blind adherence to fashion styles that aim to expose their flesh.¹⁴

The Bulgarian socialist state “emancipated” them when it de-veiled them in the name of progress; now conservative Islamism is veiling them again to liberate them, this time in the name of virtue. In her conversation with countless Muslim women, Ghodsee notes variety of responses: from those who seek to distinguish themselves from the objectification of young Bulgarian girls; to Emel, who appreciates the modest dress code but is disappointed when her husband does not allow her to work; to those who simply consider the headscarf mandatory. These responses beg the question: Isn’t the “more modest dress code” a similar form of objectification as the more Western (flesh-exposed) dress style but with reverse signification? Isn’t the “new style” another disciplinary regime, and Muslim woman’s body again a place where discourses are acted out and acted upon, where power relations (state or religious) produce particular types of identities?

Cultural Representation—Bulgaria

I proceed with the examination of media and film examples which illustrate the tension between the disciplinary regime as a site of oppression and the creation of counter-discourses and counter-identifications. On 17 March 2010, the Bulgarian TV network BTV broadcasted a short report, “In Ribnovo, there was a celebration: one year after mayor Bashev’s arrest.”¹⁵ While the 90 seconds report intentionally portrayed the “inadequacy” of such a celebration, it showed an interesting video clip depicting women dancing on the main street (see Plate 8.1). Bashev and the local teacher of religion were accused of deliberately propagating Islamic fundamentalism in Ribnovo. They were arrested but released a day later.¹⁶

The immediate Western reaction evokes women’s oppression when presumed conservative Islam is mentioned, but the video clip showed mostly women with headscarves happily engaging in festive dancing. I

Начало / Новините / България

В Рибново отпразнуваха годишнина от задържането на кмета Башев

Видео (1) | Снимки (1)

назад | напред

17.03.2010, 13:39

Видяна: 497
Коментари: 2

Рейтинг: -2

Тагове: ахмед башев,
башев, ислям, рибново



Снощи, 16 март, в село Рибново имаше истински празник. Поводът оказа се една година от задържането на кмета Ахмед Башев от ДАНС. По това време миналата година той бе арестуван по обвинение, че в селото се проповядва радикален ислямизъм. Тези твърдения на Яне Янев не се потвърдиха и кметът бе освободен. С пични тържества Башев отпразнува годишнината.

Plate 8.1. The celebration in Ribnovo—BTV report

avoid the intricacies of the arrest itself and the clearly politicized BTV report and concentrate only on the celebrating Bulgarian Muslim women. Whether this is a conscious or unconscious gesture of counter-discursive practices is debatable, but the report clearly shows female protest and resistance to state—and even religious—sanctioned attitudes to their lives, a defiant gesture to state manipulations in the context of presumed conservative Islam. Veiled women exhibit joy and perform openly their defiance of Bulgarian politics and state regulations. Tellingly, it was the women and not the men in the village who festively showed their triumph over the defeat of the Bulgarian local authorities which were forced to release the arrested mayor and teacher. Traditional Islam generally places women in the private sphere of home, while men are expected to be the public figures. In this case, however, it was the women who assumed this active public role to show insolence in the face of state authorities. While the BTV news reporter aimed to expose their disobedience and perhaps their problematic place in Bulgarian culture and state, one can also detect a gesture which challenges both state and religion. To complicate matters further, scholars and practicing Muslims share different opinions on the topic of women dancing in Islamic culture. While some scholars of religious studies contend that there is a long tradition of performance in Muslim cultures,¹⁷ others who rely on Hadith say it permits dancing only if certain rules are followed: no alcohol, no gender mixing, no effeminate movements, and no excessive dancing.¹⁸ In the clip, a few men can be seen alongside women and, more intriguingly, women have engaged in a typical Balkan style dance (*khoro* or *kolo*) rather than in a ritualistic religious dance (or belly dancing typical of the Middle East). This diverse cultural illustration, including veiled Muslim women who celebrate in a non-traditional Islamic way the release of their mayor accused in instilling fundamentalist Islam, resemble a bit the sundry responses to traditional Islam and the conservative dress code that Ghodsee collected in her study and, more specifically, to Emel and her conflicted or varied attitude: she likes and accepts the traditional dress code, but is upset and frustrated when her husband does not allow her to work. To my earlier question, isn't the "new style" another disciplinary regime, and the Muslim women's body again a place where discourses are acted out and acted upon, where power relations (state or religious) produce particular types of identities, one can answer in several ways observing this women's cel-

egration. It is not unreasonable, however, to argue that the tradition of socialism, which created an active female labor force and the new Islam in the village of Ribnovo have produced a hybrid form of relationship to power, neither a full compliance to state nor to religious ideology but rather a site of a “counter-discourse.”

The defiant spirit of these Muslim women observed in the news report can also be seen in a more daring and controversial example of the feature film *Stolen Eyes* (*Otkradnati ochi*, dir. R. Spassov, Bulgaria, 2005). It opens with narrative titles describing the ethnic cleansing orchestrated by the communist leadership in the second half of the 1980s. The assimilation campaign unfolded as government representatives escorted by soldiers raided all areas inhabited by ethnic Turks, forcing them to change their names and dress code.

The narrative title informs the viewer: It is 29 May 1989. The documentary feel is reinforced by the authentic voice-over of Todor Zhivkov, the former Bulgarian prime minister, who appealed to Turkey to open its borders and absorb the protesting members of the Bulgarian-Turkish minority, thus compelling them to emigrate after having humiliated them. The voice-over accompanies images of congested traffic at the Bulgarian–Turkish border. With long takes the camera shows endlessly melancholy lines of cars overloaded with people and luggage.



Plate 8.2. Aiten opposes the new policies by dressing in local Muslim women's dress
(*Stolen Eyes* [*Otkradnati ochi*])

Ignoring the warnings of her brother (Nejat Isler), Aiten (Vesela Kazakova) leaves one of the cars and heads back to Bulgaria, where she joins her grandfather, the sole settler of a deserted village. This defiant behavior early in the film indicates her independence and willpower.

In a flashback the film shows Aiten a few years earlier and follows her through the shattering days of the assimilation campaign, when government representatives escorted by soldiers raided all areas inhabited by ethnic Turks, forcing them to change their names. The schoolteacher Aiten (who is also a married mother of a little girl) attempts in vain to disrupt the process of abuse. Her action brings her closer to Ivan, a new recruit serving his mandatory military service, who is fascinated with her conviction and courage and who is manipulated and forced by his military commanders to participate in the campaign. In this part of the film, the personal story of Ivan and Aiten is overpowered by background trials. Spassov constructs poignant scenes of identity rape: cynically, government officials impose random Christian names, new birth places, and even different dates of birth; they erase the names from Turkish tombstones; and force the renamed citizens to celebrate their new identities. Aiten's husband's death early in the events and her brother's protest and hostility toward the officials deepen her conflict and make her reject her new name vehemently (see Plate 8.2). With conviction Aiten opens a sealed mosque and leads women and children who attempt to block the road of the soldiers reinforcing the new regulations. Tragedy strikes when Aiten's little daughter is lost in the crowd and is run over by a tank. It becomes clear that the tank was driven by Ivan who caused the girl's death in his panic and bewilderment. Shocked, he loses his memory and is placed in a mental institution. Soon thereafter Aiten finds herself in the same clinic. After being released, Aiten's hostility and rejection of Ivan continues until it slowly and hesitantly changes into acceptance (see Plate 8.3). Spassov decides to end the film with Aiten and Ivan falling in love. The image of their new house, standing between the village's mosque and church becomes a sign of the filmmakers' hope and optimism for ethnic peace in Bulgaria.

Despite this romanticized ending, the film, created by Spassov and Neri Terzieva, a Turkish Bulgarian journalist, is about Aiten, her willpower and perseverance. Kazakova's performance is convincing and arresting when she projects Aiten's dilemma: to continue her life in Bulgaria and at the same time keep her human dignity (although



Plate 8.3. Aiten learning how to relate to Ivan and accept him (*Stolen Eyes* [*Otkradhati ochi*])

despite the actress's efforts to learn Turkish, she is dubbed in parts of the film, which makes her presence less persuasive). Aiten stands against both state policies and her own family traditions, a brave sign of independence and counter-identification. The viewer observes her gradual development and change from an ordinary citizen to a rebellion who protests not only the state's enforced assimilation but her brother's more traditional Islam. In other words, she actively opposes any ideology which attempts to define her by rules and regulations.

Interestingly, Spassov, Bulgaria's best-known cinematographer in the 1980s, worked on *Time of Violence* (*Vreme na nasilie*, 1988), which was released in the heat of the official assimilation campaign that humiliated and harassed Bulgarian Turks, depicted in *Stolen Eyes*.¹⁹ It seems fifteen years after the end of the socialist regime in Bulgaria, Spassov tried to offer an impartial view of the ethnic interactions in Bulgaria and to unveil the destructive impact of official practices, as well as the dangers of social indifference. It is particularly pertinent that Spassov cowrote the screenplay with a Bulgarian Turkish journalist, Neri Terzieva, and also cast the Turkish actor, Nejat Isler, as Aiten's brother.²⁰

These two media examples, a news report and a feature film, represent Bulgarian Muslim women who, despite the "disciplinary regime" they are expected to comply with, exhibit counter-identifactory behavior. In the first case, the women of Ribnovo willingly adhere to

the traditional Islamic norm of life (at least visible in their clothing), abiding by a certain (male) religious ideology but engage in a public joyous performance in defiance of state politics. The feature film, although fictional, similarly depicts a Bulgarian Turkish woman who rebels against both state and family (religious) traditions and takes charge of her destiny.

Social Realities—Bosnia and Herzegovina

The suffering of Turkish Bulgarian women at the end of the 1980s, although painful and humiliating, pales in comparison to the extreme physical violation that Bosnian women were subjected to during the 1990s.²¹ The Yugoslav Wars and, more specifically, the war in Bosnia raised a lot of questions about the marginalization and victimization of Bosnian women. The estimates of rapes during the Bosnian War (1991–1995) were over 20,000.²² Unlike the Nuremberg Charter, which did not include special provisions for rape, in 2001 The Hague International War Crimes Tribunal for Yugoslavia identified rape and sexual enslavement as “crimes against humanity.”²³ Since the early 1990s, much has been reported and written about rapes in the Yugoslav Wars. These atrocities have been examined from various perspectives: from analyzing the traumatic consequences for individuals, families, and society to probing the international legal system that defines crimes against humanity and genocide. Emphasizing male-on-female sexual violence, which demanded attention and activism, feminist scholarship had both a direct and indirect impact on the changes of international criminal law. Only a few voices of discontent emerged, “attending to the trauma [violated women] might have experienced without allowing that trauma to define them and their communities in an overdetermined manner.”²⁴ However, the predominant scholarship on war rapes explores the victimization of women.

Serbian soldiers’ violation of Muslim women (mostly Bosniak) intensified their subjugation. Rape generated not only the trauma of bodily abuse but also social rejection and marginalization enforced by family members and society. According to the traditions of many Muslim families in rural Bosnia and Kosovo, a raped female member

dishonors and shames her husband, father, and brother(s). Cases of rape victims testify that violated women were expelled from their communities or killed by their husbands; some committed suicide after the rape.²⁵ A story of a Kosovar Albanian girl reports that after witnessing her repeated rape, her father sent her to join the Kosovo Liberation Army, where she would seek revenge against her abusers, and her likely death would redeem his honor.²⁶ Thus, Bosniak women were subjected both to the consequences of state/nationalist agendas and Islamic family traditions that center on protecting the honor of women and their families.²⁷

Constituted by the legacy of two empires, the Ottoman and the Habsburg, the ethnic and religious makeup of Bosnia and Herzegovina differs from the one in Bulgaria, with Muslim Bosniaks forming the largest group, followed by Orthodox Serbs, and Catholic Croats. These differences paired with the bequest of the Yugoslav Wars, poverty, unemployment, and reintegration problems, define the experience of Bosnian women as incomparable in today's Balkans. Yet, there are certain similarities (even if subsidiary) between them and Bulgarian Muslim women.

Despite the lack of consistent data about the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, since the last census was in 2001, various sources point out that about half of the population is female.²⁸ In the rural areas, they suffer much higher unemployment than men and receive less compensation for the same work performed. Similar is the condition of Bulgarian Muslim women in the eastern Rhodope region.²⁹ While this tendency does not apply only to rural areas and Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria, the scale of the inequality is comparable in the two countries and is less pronounced in other Western states, for example.

In addition, the participation of women in the legislature shows a similar rate of acceptance and realization. The organization Peace-women published the representation of women in politics after the October 2010 elections as follows: the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly House of Representatives includes 16.62 percent women; the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly House of Peoples—13.3 percent; the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Representatives—20.4 percent; and Republika Srpska National Assembly—24 percent. I have been unable to locate any reliable data on the ethnic and religious diversity of these women who

were elected to legislative positions, but it is safe to assume that considerable percentage of them are Muslim, with the exception of the 24 percent women in the Republika Srpska National Assembly.³⁰ These overall numbers do not differ from the representation of women in the Bulgarian parliament; only Bulgarian Muslim women would appear to be far less represented.

The emergence of foreign-born conservative Islam (Salafism) likewise parallels the imported Arabic Islam in certain regions of Bulgaria. Commentators point out that although this Islamic practice has no wide support among moderate Bosnian Muslims, the institution of Salafism is rather successful in recruiting young, often disenfranchised, men seeking certainty and meaning in a world which offers them very little.³¹ Ghodsee's conclusions that Wahhabism in Bulgaria thrives in economically depressed regions suggests another comparable phenomenon in Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina, namely, the failures of the states to secure livelihood opportunities and create social structures opened the door in both countries to the influences of conservative Islam from the Middle East.³²

Cultural Representation—Bosnia and Herzegovina

It comes as no surprise that in the last twenty years Bosnian women painfully experienced not only state breakdowns and aggressive male national agendas, but also new, more restrictive religious norms. I proceed with the discussion of a few feature films: *Esma's Secret* (*Grbavica*, 2006)³³ and *On the Path* (*Na putu*, 2010) by the prominent Sarajevo director Jasmila Žbanić, films which address the consequences for women today of both the Yugoslav Wars and the recent increase of foreign-born conservative Islam in Bosnia. Aida Begić's *Snow* (*Snijeg*, 2008) and *Children of Sarajevo* (*Djeca*, 2012) also invite comments.

In *Esma's Secret*, early in the film, the viewer learns that Esma, a middle-aged Bosnian woman, on whose face the camera dwells in the opening scene, lives with her teenage daughter, Sara, in Grbavica, a Sarajevo suburb and a site of Serbian rape camps during the war. After several signs of Esma's awkwardness around men, the viewer realizes the secret behind Sara's parentage, and the climactic scene, when the truth comes out, is a revelation only for Sara.

As a single mother, Esma maintains two jobs to make the most basic ends meet, but when Sara tells her that a school trip will cost €200, desperation overwhelms her. Esma's permanent exhaustion and her anxiety are powerfully projected by the excellent performance of Mirjana Karanović; her body language and sorrowful facial expressions are more eloquent than the sparse dialogue. Material privation, however, is only one of Esma's difficulties, as she is under daily pressure from her daughter to prove that Sara's father was *šehid*, a hero who died defending Bosnia. More importantly, Sara herself is bullied by her classmates and coerced by society at large to maintain the myth. Children of *šehids* have a discount on the school trip, and inclusion in the list of such children not only provides them with financial assistance, but also elevates their status socially and culturally. When her mother fails to provide a certificate of her father's heroic past, Sara physically fights with her classmates in order to maintain the story of her *šehid* father. That fight represents her struggle to be included in a society where alliance with *šehids* determines identity.

Only one sequence modifies this presentation of Sara's complete submission to the mythic construction of her identity, closely tied to the heroic national identity of resistance against the Serbian aggressor. At home, she rehearses the lyrics of a song about Bosnia's might and beauty—a song that she ought to know by heart as part of her school assignments. The camera shows Sara lying on the sofa, her head hanging upside down over the edge of the sofa. The reversed shot of her face, coupled with the difficulty she has remembering the lyrics, hints at Sara's unconscious doubts about her identity as well as of the official construction of Bosnia's national ideology. Frustrated by her inability to memorize the lyrics, Sara calls the poem "stupid." A single scene does not overturn the overall impression of Sara as someone struggling to insert herself in the "accepted" ideology, but it does sound a dissonant note, however faint, in the homogeneous ideological discourse.

A rebellious teenager and tomboy, the daughter callously upsets her mother, questioning her morality and integrity as at gunpoint she demands to know the truth about her father (see Plate 8.4). And the mother's powerful, emotional response addresses not just Sara, but the society that substitutes macho myths for reality: "You want to know the truth? Here's the truth! I was raped in the war camps and you're the bastard of a Chetnik!" Esma's outburst challenges



Plate 8.4. Sara demanding to know the truth (*Esma's Secret* [Grbavica])

the public construction of national identity, for personal trauma and dilemmas of identity cannot be separated from the society's anxieties about national identity.

Though painful, the truth about Sara's parenthood, once articulated, is also liberating. By admitting and accepting the horrific reality, Esma (and, potentially, the community) acknowledges the past, with all its harrowing consequences. The moment marks a dramatic moral and psychological turn as Esma renounces the lies of her culture's dominant myth. The scene ends as Esma, leaving Sara crying on the sofa, sits on a chair with her back to the camera, as if ignoring the spectator's inquisitive gaze. Sara's diegetic sob is gradually transformed into the intradiegetic female vocals of an *ilahija*. After this sound transition, the camera cuts to a close-up of the woman singing the song before shifting to an all-female group therapy meeting. Panning slowly across the faces of the women—all of them engulfed in their own pain and sorrow—the camera finally settles on Esma's face as she softly sobs. In a following crosscut the viewer observes Sara shaving her head; Esma's voice saying how she originally had wanted to kill her effects a transition back to the group therapy. This montage, relying on both vocal and visual transitions, powerfully connects mother and daughter at the most critical and conflictive moment of their lives.

Enduring the catharsis of voicing the truth, Esma for the first time is able to narrate her devastating experience, to recuperate her



Plate 8.5. Esma voices her secrets and pains (*Esma's Secret* [Grbavica])

memories, to give expression to the trauma (see Plate 8.5). According to Judith Herman, clinical professor of psychiatry, the second stage for a victim of trauma who has established safety is telling the story of the trauma. Although not referring to the film or the heroine, Herman's observations of the second stage illuminate well Esma's courageous retelling of her violation. Herman points out, "She tells it completely, in depth and in detail. This work of reconstruction actually transforms the traumatic memory, so that it can be integrated into the survivor's life story."³⁴ Esma not only admits the truth to her daughter, but also shares her memory of the violation with other women in the social therapy group. This liberating though long-delayed and excruciating "opening-up" is symbolically significant for Esma's life, the first step toward her psychological recovery and healthy, albeit difficult, future.

"I pounded my belly with my fists to make her fall out of me. It was no use. My belly grew with her inside. Even then they came. In twos, threes, every day. In the hospital when I gave birth to her, I said: 'I don't want her. Take her away.'" When she hears the baby crying behind the wall, however, her milk gushes from her breast and she decides to feed the infant, just once. If up to that point it is the biological-maternal instinct that prompts Esma to have contact with her newborn, the decisive moment comes when Esma sees her so small and beautiful, and decides to keep her daughter. Esma's response to the sight of her infant

entails a long-forgotten aesthetic recognition: "I had already forgotten that there was anything beautiful in this world." The scene implies not only maternal instincts but also a symbolic mediation, expressed through her aesthetic choice that determines her decision. I argue that Žbanić shows the raped woman's conscious resolve to become a mother despite the violation that led to her baby's conception and the dramatic consequences to her and her offspring. Her choice is not reduced to her maternal instincts, for agency plays a key role in her decision.

Esma is portrayed as a woman of will and determination. A scene in which she unexpectedly encounters her aunt Safija in a mall illustrates Esma's marginalization by the family. The aunt, a hypocritical elderly woman who wears a fur coat but complains that her pension is too small for her to lend Esma money for Sara's school trip, reflects society's discrimination against raped women, especially in her remark about the shame Esma brought on the family. The highly unpleasant encounter with a family member, from whom one might expect understanding and support, however, leaves Esma unshaken, and she proceeds to seek and secure the funds elsewhere. An episode similarly evidencing Esma's willpower involves her nightclub-owning boss, who physically attacks her and his bouncer, Pelda (who has developed a romantic relationship with Esma), knocks the man down, and drags Esma out of the night club. When he insists that Esma join him in the car, she resolutely refuses and walks away, disgusted by the violent scene. Despite the abuse and subjugation that she has experienced, Esma has taken control of her life.

The film's concluding sequence, of the students' departure for the trip, testifies to the difficulties that mother and daughter need to overcome in order to reestablish their bond. The scene of the mother and daughter's hesitant, ambivalent reunion through the final reciprocal gaze in Žbanić's film unveils a space of recovery and of possibility for a future. Herman contends that after the survivor comes to terms with her traumatic past, she "faces the task of creating a future."³⁵ Having acknowledged the painful truth of the rapist father, a truth that has settled between mother and daughter, *Esma's Secret's* final scene invites imagining a female locus where (to quote Julia Kristeva) "alterity becomes nuance, contradiction becomes a variant, tension becomes passage, and discharge becomes peace."³⁶ This imaginative space (which uncannily parallels the city of Sarajevo) promises life to raped women,

life that is a burden rather than a privilege, for it entails a motherhood that needs reconciliation with the past so as to empower the future.

Žbanić's most recent film *On the Path*, which like *Esma's Secret* received much international acclaim, presents the search of a young Bosnian couple on the path to love and life in unity.³⁷ Their paths, however, diverge and Luna (Zrinka Cvitešić), the leading female character, wonders whether love is enough to keep them together. Unlike Esma, whose choice of motherhood was painful and traumatic, Luna desires a child with Amar (Leon Lučev), the man she loves. Like the story and characters in *Esma's Secret*, burdened with the hurtful past of the war, the couple in *On the Path* faces many challenges; one of which is Amar's increased desperation caused by his unemployment and heavy drinking habits. A meeting with an old friend, Bahrija, presents the opportunity of a computer-teaching job in a secluded village. Amar embraces the well-paid job and for weeks is separated from Luna. When she is allowed to visit him, she finds a world of strict religious rituals, bearded men, and veiled women. A few scenes during her stay in the community show her at odds with their rituals. She refuses to wear the headscarf and follow their traditions. Contrary to female behavior in conservative Islamic context, she even talks back and accuses Bahrija that she is not the one who shames Amar but he is. Unlike her, Amar begins to find peace and meaning in the lifestyle of Salafi Muslims.

Upon his return home, Amar is a changed man. The rift between them is growing when Amar insists that Luna read religious literature and that they abstain from sex until they are married under Islamic law. Originally prejudiced toward Amar's Salafi friends, she struggles to understand him as she slowly recognizes the positive changes in his life: he has stopped drinking and wants to become a better man. However, several scenes demonstrate the opposite cultures of the two worlds Amar and Luna begin to occupy: his, strictly Islamic, and hers, more secular. Celebrations of *Kurban Bayram* and weddings in Amar's community and Luna's family reveal the marked difference in their perception of life and the world. The former are reserved and quiet with little participation by women. The latter are joyful and loud with the visible involvement of women.

The end does not come as a surprise. Her desire to remain independent and truthful to herself as a person prevails over her wish for a child



Plate 8.6. Luna and Amar's last conversation (*On the Path* [Na putu])

with Amar, for his house is no longer hers. In a powerful farewell scene, she informs him that she is pregnant, but is not sure whether she would keep the baby (see Plate 8.6). When she walks away from him, he calls her to come back. In a determinate gesture, she turns toward him and quietly but firmly responds: "You come back to me." The last scene of the film shows her continuing her life and working as a flight attendant.

Luna rejects the Muslim dress code and the values that come with it as something foreign to her, a gesture akin to Aiten's resolve. This is not to say that the film attempts to take sides or is propagandistic. Žbanić writes: "I had to be very careful not to impose ideas and beliefs that would turn the film into propaganda. I am not here to judge nor defend Salafism, Wahhabism, Islam, or any other religion. I love my characters and I let their personalities dictate the story."³⁸ Although one does not have to believe the words of the director, the film effectively reveals the personal and psychological dilemmas of the two main characters in the face of adversity. It is Luna, however, with whom the viewer sympathizes because Amar's transformation, although understandable, appears quick and easy, and Luna is left with a difficult choice.

Reconciliation with the past, as an underlying necessity for society to move on, also features prominently in *Snow*, Aida Begić's debut film which was awarded the Grand Prix at the Cannes' Critic's Week. The film presents a remote village in eastern Bosnia shortly after the devastation of the war. The events unravel in a week of 1997: a group of a few younger and older women, children, and an old man inhabit a small village destroyed by the war, as they try to make a living and make



Plate 8.7. Alma on a remote road expecting customers for homemade jams (*Snow [Snijeg]*)

sense of their condition. The rest of their families (husbands, fathers, and other children) have been killed in the war or are missing but their bodies never found and the need for closure becomes the main cinematic focus of the film. The leading character, Alma, a woman in her late 20s, is determined to save the village by producing jam and pastries, while others are willing to sell their properties to outsiders (two Serbs, one local and one living abroad) (see Plate 8.7). Their village is too isolated, however, and there is no hope to sell their products.

With a terrible autumn storm, tension increases and all, including the outsiders, are forced to face the truth: the women learn that the bodies of their relatives are disposed of in a cave. One of the most striking elements of the film is the cinematic portrayal of Alma, an observant—or, to evoke Ibrahimpašić's description—"a pious Muslim [*osvješćena/pobožna Muslimanka*]," who transmits resolve and resilience in the face of overwhelming difficulties. The camera attentively and affectionately follows Alma, often in slow motion, revealing her internal strength at the backdrop of a desperate reality. Her colorful headscarves stand out against a gray and bleak landscape and define her unassuming willpower. It is Alma and her mother-in-law who oppose



Plate 8.8. Rahima speaking her mind to her boss (*Children of Sarajevo* [Djeca])

the sale of the village land and property to the two Serbs and actively gather support from the rest of the women. After finding the remains of their loved ones and struggling with memories of the past, the first snow falls down and a truck driver who promised to deliver their goods to town unexpectedly shows up. Similar to Esma and Luna, Alma does not allow conditions and circumstances to dictate her existence. Unlike Esma and Luna, however, Alma is a practicing Muslim but this religious belonging does not define her as an obedient and passive woman compliant to state or religious norms.

In her second film, *Children of Sarajevo* (*Djeca*, 2012), Begić returns to the theme of the past with its haunting memories and devastating realities for the present-day people of Sarajevo.³⁹ Orphans of the Bosnian war, Rahima (23), played by Marija Pikić, and Nedim (14) live in Sarajevo. While Rahima found comfort in Islam, her younger brother seems to be far from seeking spiritual peace and guidance in any religion. He clashes with the son of the local minister and, as Rahima tries to protect and help him, she discovers that he hides many secrets. Memories and fragments of the past scattered throughout the narrative (TV news footage, a soundtrack of deafening explosions, and a home video of children singing) create an impression that the war is still on. The war has certainly marked profoundly their present lives. Mostly non-confrontational and inexpressive, Rahima is determined

to help her brother and get him out of the criminal world in which he is sinking. Two particular scenes reveal her strength and resolution. Unafraid of possible repercussions, she confronts the local Minister in an attempt to protect her brother. She also responds rather abruptly to her boss in the kitchen where she works when the manager reprimands her for the decoration of the Christmas tree (see Plate 8.8). The film ends with a relatively reassuring moment of a new brother and sister bonding. The cinematic style and camera work reinforce both Rahima's search for her place in life and her resolute character. The camera gently but persistently follows her everywhere and reconfirms the impression of her unyielding personality.

Although fiction, the films of both Jasmila Žbanić and Aida Begić well exemplify the life of Bosniak women today and testify to their active search for identity and place in society in the dramatic transition period after the war. While Žbanić's female protagonists Esma and Luna follow a more "conventional Islamic lifestyle" (*obična* or *tradicionalna Bosanska Muslimanka*), according to Ibrahimović, Begić's heroines embrace "pious" Islam in their quest for meaning and spiritual peace. These two positions vis-à-vis Islam reflect the choices of the two female directors: while Žbanić is a non-practicing Muslim and identifies with the secular side of Bosnian culture,⁴⁰ Begić is a practicing Muslim and a defender of this choice for women. She insists that there isn't "any clash between her faith and her appreciation of western culture."⁴¹ In her informative article "Bosnian Women: Threat or Opportunity?" France Press Agency journalist Sabina Niksic quotes Begić saying, "I was shaped by European literature, arts, and music, and Bach is as much a part of my identity as [Muslim mystic and poet Jalaluddin] Rumi."⁴²

These diverse opinions of Bosnian women (cinematic characters or film directors) resemble the Bulgarian examples of the women in Ghodsee's study, the ones in Ribnovo, and the film character Aiten, adopting opposite positions vis-à-vis Islam and yet all these women reveal determination and present challenges to state or religious power and ideology. Perhaps the mixed tradition of socialist secularism and European cultural influence (evident in the social status of women in the two countries briefly discussed earlier) combined with the reemergence of Islam in the region⁴³ contributes to these varied identifications, but they all exemplify what Foucault calls "counter-identifications" and "counter-discourses."

Analyzing fiction as a methodology always begs the question of authenticity of experience and representation. Žbanić and Begić and their casts all experienced the war either first-hand or have family and friends who did. It is interesting to note that the popularity of *Esma's Secret* contributed to new legislation which granted war veteran status (with benefits) to war-raped women. When preparing for *On the Path*, Žbanić and the actors lived with veiled women and spent time in Salafi circles; the male characters learned to recite the Koran; and a scene was shot with real-life Salafis. A team of women and men—Bulgarian, Turkish Bulgarian, and Turkish filmmakers—created *Stolen Eyes*, thus avoiding the critique that minorities should not and cannot be represented by the dominant ethnic, religious, or gender group.

To the objection that a creative work constitutes a representation that inadequately substitutes for real agency and, in fact, may explore the traumatic experience and thus erase the materiality of the suffering, one can respond in several ways.⁴⁴ Depending on their aesthetic and psychological power and integrity, such works can, at one extreme, collude in the construction of spectators as voyeurs who enjoy a secret pleasure in exploiting the characters' affliction, or, at the other end of the spectrum, enable spectators to attain "the position of being a witness"—an effect that can open a space for the "transformation of the viewer through empathic identification."⁴⁵ The latter, obviously, is not only humane, but also the position which contributes to possible forms of resistance to control and to the creation of counter-identifications.

I have analyzed mostly fictional works by Bulgarian and Bosnian women and men whose views, regardless of their different backgrounds, converge in the portrayal of women's experiences caught between state and mosque. The films discussed here expose and subvert the disciplinary regimes, which define women's lives during war and peace. Their female characters, Aiten, Esma, Luna, Alma, and Rahima, create counter-discursive practices which reveal the filmmakers' desire to open space in which counter-identifications are possible. These female characters refuse to accept their lives as they are restricted and mapped out for them by others and, either subversively or not, preserve their subjectivity and agency.

NOTES

- 1 Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 162–165.
- 2 Ibid., 162.
- 3 Ibid., 164.
- 4 See <http://www.nsi.bg/census2011/index.php>.
- 5 A note of clarification is warranted here. The Muslim minorities in Bulgaria generally belong to three different communities: (1) Bulgarian Turks, a population which remained in Bulgarian territories after Bulgaria's independence from the Ottoman Empire; (2) ethnic Bulgarians who converted to Islam in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which, in turn, are either Bulgarian speaking or Turkish speaking (they are also known as "Pomak," a term that carries pejorative connotation); and (3) Romani Muslims.
- 6 R. Dimitrova et al., "Collective Identity and Well-being of Mainstream and Minority Adolescents in Bulgaria," *International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology, Regional Conference*, Istanbul, July 2011.
- 7 These findings are not surprising considering the relative degree of alienation of Muslim minorities and their feeling of non-belonging to the Bulgarian nation. Their positive identifiatory mark becomes religion while Bulgarians identify more strongly with their national community. For similar and different conduits of identification among other Balkan communities, see Victor A. Friedman's and Brenna Miller's chapters in this volume.
- 8 See "Bez napreduk v globalna klasatzia" [Without advancement in global ranking], http://www.dnevnik.bg/sviat/2009/10/27/805717_bulgariia_bez_napreduk_v_globalna_klasaciia_z/. (Bosnia and Herzegovina is not included in the report.)
- 9 See <http://www.parliament.bg/>.
- 10 "Zhenite uveluchavat vlianieto si v burgarskata politika" [Women increase their influence in Bulgarian politics], <http://www.monitor.bg/article?id=231962>.
- 11 Mary Neuburger, *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), passim.
- 12 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* 2nd ed. (Vintage, 1995), passim.
- 13 Neuburger, *The Orient*, 141.
- 14 Kristen Ghodsee, *Muslim Lives in Eastern Europe: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Transformation of Islam in Postsocialist Bulgaria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). Contrary to the religious experience observed by Ghodsee in Madan, in other villages and particularly Manastir where

I have interacted with Bulgarian Muslims in the last twenty years, the historically local (more secular) Islam is prevalent.

- 15 "V Ribnovo otpraznuvakh godishnina ot zadurzhaneto na kmeta Bashev" [In Robnovo, there was a celebration of the anniversary of the mayor Bashev's arrest], http://btvnovinite.bg/article/1217030539-V_Ribnovo_otpraznuvaha_godishnina_ot_zadarjaneto_na_kmeta_Bashev.html.
- 16 Ribnovo's population is predominantly ethnic Bulgarian Muslims (or Pomaks). The village became the center of debates around religious freedoms in Bulgaria, as it more strongly and visibly manifests its religious belonging compared to other villages of ethnic Bulgarian Muslims in the Rhodope Mountains. For more on the Pomaks' identification and their language in Bulgaria and Greece, see Friedman's chapter in this volume.
- 17 For more on the religious and ritualistic performances in Islam and the participation of women, see Vernon Schubel, *Religious Performance in Contemporary Islam: Shi'i Devotional Rituals in South Asia* (Columbia: South Carolina University Press, 1993), and *The Women of Karbala: Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shi'i Islam*, ed. Kamran Aghaie et al. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009).
- 18 Omar Sacirbey, "Are Muslims Allowed to Dance? Depends Who You Ask." *Huffington Post*, 10 January 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/30/are-muslims-allowed-to-dance_n_1841280.html.
- 19 For more on *Time of Violence*, see Yana Hashamova, "(Re)Negotiating Identities: Representations of Muslim Minorities in Bulgarian Film." *Film International* 8.3 (2010), 69–90.
- 20 This does not mean that the film was accepted as an apology by all Bulgarian viewers. After the Bulgarian National Television aired the film in 2007, the Bulgarian nationalist party VMRO organized protests in front of the Bulgarian Television headquarters, arguing that the film does not truthfully represent the past and erodes the dignity of the Bulgarian. Average viewers, however, recorded their support for the film by narrating their memories of the events and specific cases in which Bulgarians beat up and humiliated Turks during the campaign.
- 21 It should be explained here that I use "Bosnian women" to refer to women citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, either Muslim or Catholic (Croats), whereas "Bosniak women" describes ethnic Slavs from the region who converted to Islam in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, similar to the Bulgarian ethnic Muslims.
- 22 Lynda Boose, "Crossing the River Drina: Bosnian Rape Camps, Turkish Impalement, and Serbian Cultural Memory." *Signs* 28 (Autumn 2002), 71–96.
- 23 Siobhan Fischer, "The Occupation of the Womb: Forced Impregnation as Genocide." *Duke Law Journal* 46.1 (1996), 91–133.

- 24 Karen Eagle, "Feminism and Its (Dis)Contents: Criminalizing Wartime Rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina." *The American Journal of International Law* 99.4 (2005), 778–816.
- 25 Vera Folnegovic-Smalc, "Psychiatric Aspects of the Rapes in the War against the Republics of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina," in *Mass Rape*, ed. Alexandra Stiglmayer (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 174–180.
- 26 Boose, "Crossing the River," 73.
- 27 The dress code (or the new *arabski stil*), as Ghodsee discusses it, aims similarly at protecting the honor of Bulgarian Muslim women. Naturally, I do not intend to compare the extreme conditions of the war Bosniak women were subjected to with the newly emergent dress code of some Muslim communities in Bulgaria, code adopted voluntarily and during peace times.
- 28 GenderCentar; International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD].
- 29 See Ghodsee, *Muslim Lives*, passim.
- 30 See http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/bosniaherzegovina_nationalactionplan_2010.pdf.
- 31 "Bosnia Police Raid Conservative Muslim Village." *BBC News*, 2 February 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8493855.stm>; Edina Becirevic, "The Bosnian Approach to the Fight against Terrorism," in *The Fight against Terrorism and Crisis Management in the Western Balkans*, ed. I. Prezelj (IOS Press, 2008).
- 32 For more on the experience of Bosniak women in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, see Emira Ibrahimovic, "Women Living Islam in Post-War and Post-Socialist Bosnia and Herzegovina" (PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 2012), <http://hdl.handle.net/1928/21042>. Her thesis examines the two main forms of Islam in post-war Bosnia: "conventional (*obična* or *tradicionalna Bosanska Muslimanka*) and pious (*osvješćena/pobožna Muslimanka*)" and how women from these two different communities understand themselves and their relationship to Islam. For a more general discussion of women's experiences in post-war Bosnia, see Elissa Helms, "The Gender of Coffee: Women and Reconciliation Initiatives in Post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Focaal* 57 (2010), 17–32.
- 33 The film won the Golden Bear at the 56th Berlin International Film and it was Bosnia and Herzegovina's official entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 79th Academy Awards.
- 34 Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 175.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 196.
- 36 Julia Kristeva. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. T. Gora et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 240.

- 37 At the 7th Yerevan Golden Apricot International Film Festival the film won the FIPRESCI Prize and it was also nominated for The Golden Bear prize at the 60th Berlin International Film Festival.
- 38 Pressbook. http://deblokada.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/pressbook_onthepath.pdf.
- 39 The film competed in the Un Certain Regard section at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival and received a special distinction.
- 40 In a *Sarajevo Times* article, she reportedly said that “she filmed her second movie *Na Putu* as an atheist and a feminist” (“Jasmila Žbanić: There is More Potential in B&H Than Has Been Realized,” 23 August 2013, <http://www.sarajevotimes.com/jasmila-zbanic-there-is-more-potential-in-bh-than-has-been-realized/>).
- 41 Sabina Niksic, “Bosnian Women: Threat or Opportunity?” Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence, <http://fellowship.birn.eu.com/en/fellowship-programme/topic-2009-identity-bosnian-muslims-threat-or-opportunity>.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 For more on the processes of religious identifications in Bosnia and Bulgaria, see Brenna Miller’s chapter in this volume and Ghodsee’s *Muslim Lives*.
- 44 For more on this and the ways artistic performances serve ideological and national constructions or challenge them, see Donna Buchanan’s chapter in this volume.
- 45 *Trauma and Cinema: Cross-Cultural Explorations*, ed. Ann Kaplan and Ban Wang (Aberdeen: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 9–10.

CHAPTER 9

(Post?)National Portraits from the Postsocialist Soundstage: Three Bulgarian Folkloric Productions of the 2000s

Donna A. Buchanan

Introduction

In Bulgaria, “contemporary debates” regarding the nature and implication of “national idioms” in the postsocialist state, and the moral logics they suggest, are amply illuminated by folkloric theater and discourse.¹ While conducting ethnomusicological fieldwork on contemporary Bulgarian folkloric performance between October 2007 and July 2009, I encountered divergent multimedia productions by three rival national ensembles whose narratives collectively pose a postmodernist inquiry into the politics of representation.² In this chapter, I juxtapose these staged commentaries to tease out the perspectival dialogues on nation currently at play within Bulgarian artistic communities and to interrogate the sorts of geopolitics and solidarities that they suggest. My hypothesis is that through such narratives, the three ensembles manipulate ideology and temporality (including constructions of history and memory) in equally strategic but disparate ways to dramatize conflicting “moral geographies” of the postsocialist nation whose affective resonance is cued by and then experienced through a multimediated counterpoint of musical, choreographic, and visual signs.³ These signs invoke, and invite viewers to imagine, social alignments within, beyond, because, and in spite of the state that refract the ongoing reterritorialization of Bulgarian subjectivity, especially as it relates to changing interpretations of citizenship.

I use “reterritorialization” here in a sense somewhat inspired by Arjun Appadurai’s “deterritorialization,” or the process (and force) by

which a population may become detached from or even stripped of its home turf, consequently emigrating and residing elsewhere—or even in multiple elsewhere.⁴ Such displaced or deterritorialized populations, which might include migrant laborers, expatriates, refugees, and diaspora communities, among other less conventional peripatetic actors, frequently retain at least a fractured, partial relationship with their birth land, nation, and comembers of that nation, whether through return visits and personal contact, or through mediated images and products of the imagination, such as films, novels, plays, and other artistic works. These creative works help bind nation-communities together across vast geographic distances, state borders, and virtual space, thereby exacerbating the disjuncture between nation and state in the deterritorialized subject's adopted territory. The fractious relationship between nation and state becomes “a battle of the imagination,” in which the state struggles to formulate a homogenous, unified nation-population, while resident nations, including deterritorialized groups sometimes in league with compatriots or conationals across state boundaries, work to “cannibalize” the state in return.⁵

The reterritorialization of Bulgarian subjectivity with which this study is concerned, then, entails the fluid reimagining and reemplacement or reinscribing of Bulgarian senses of self across multiple, overlapping territorial and geopolitical configurations following the ground shift of political transition, when the state as construct, and its established relationships to the resident nations within as well as those nations and states without, dissolved. It is about how notions or sensibilities of Bulgarianness are being conceptually remapped, or played out in relation to other peoples and lands in the context of the postsocialist nation-state battle, and how this reemplaced subjectivity is being asserted performatively—that is, through expressive agency—in this case, through folkloric productions that speak to how Bulgarian citizenship might and should be defined and enacted.

Neshanŭl Art

In April 2008 I viewed the spectacle *Bezhanŭsi* (Refugees), performed by Neshka Robeva's company of thirty-four professional dancers at

the Theater of Laughter and Tears, located in Sofia's theater district. Born in 1946 in the northern Bulgarian city of Ruse, Robeva sustained a brilliant thirty-three-year career as a competitor on, and then coach of, the national rhythmic gymnastics team before singlehandedly initiating, in 2000, an innovative theatrical style combining her gymnastics with ballet, modern, ballroom, and folk dance in staged dramas set to original scores involving live music and prerecorded, electronic soundtracks. Her troupe, christened "Neshanŭl Art," a pun on her name and testament to the avowed national stature of her work, has thus far toured seven major productions worldwide, of which *Refugees* and her 2010 retrospective gala, *The Party (Kuponŭt)*, are the most recent.⁶

Refugees explores three centuries of Balkan emigration to Argentina. Set in the smoky, alcohol-saturated bistros of a Buenos Aires evening, it takes the tango as a metaphorical point of departure for exploring the sensibility of diasporic experience: the heartbreak of loneliness, the nostalgia for a romanticized homeland, the yearning for happiness, the passion for sweethearts abandoned and new loves embraced, and the inexorable play of destiny in steering one's life course. The sentiments and sensuality inscribed in the tango's sound and steps trigger a cascade of memories among an immigrant population whose ethnic composition is a microcosm of the prior Ottoman dominion. Characterized by regionally appropriate music and dance, the reminiscences of Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Jews, Macedonians, Serbs, and Turks become a means of revisiting specific places and moments, and acknowledging the results of intercultural contact and rupture. Importantly, in contrast to more conservative interpretations of Bulgarian history, Robeva treats Ottoman governance neither as positive nor negative, but simply as fact—a template for intercultural admixture and contemporary performativity.

The show's symbolically rich color scheme of red, white, and especially, black unifies what otherwise might seem a disjointed slide-show of ethnic abstractions merging territory, history, and society in a manner out of place and time.⁷ Bolts of gauzy red and black cloth skirt the dancers' choreographic figures throughout the performance; in one of the show's most artful moments, an adaptation from rhythmic gymnastics, two broad folds of black chiffon gracefully ribbon several dancers to create a stylized bow. In my mind's eye, I immediately envi-

sioned these as the black bows typically hung on villagers' gates and doors to identify that they are in mourning. In fact, the predominance of black lends a melancholy quality to the entire production. That the show's title is "Refugees" and not "Immigrants" further cultivates a sense of profound loss. Emigration, the show implies, is a kind of death. But it is also a metamorphosis—a kind of death from which new lifeways, alliances, and societies are born.

In music, choreography, and conception, *Refugees* uniquely situates Bulgarians within an intercontinental demographic flow, turning outward to a Balkan diaspora that has swollen exponentially in the past twenty years but which remains little examined. Indeed, I would argue that few Bulgarians today have not been touched by migration in some capacity, whether through short-term migrant labor in other parts of Europe and Turkey, or permanent emigration to cities such as Chicago, Las Vegas, and Atlanta. In my experience this is especially true of musicians, artistic refugees displaced by economic privation and the collapse of state support for their work. The theme of this production, then, resonates strongly with contemporary circumstances, its content a metaphor of postsocialist fractures.

Throughout the production, Robeva uses rhythmic gymnastics to accentuate musical and choreographic conjunctures tethering the spatiotemporally near and distant. In one exemplary scene, the choreography of conventional Balkan and Jewish dance is melded with that of the more cosmopolitan tango against an eclectic soundtrack of regional musical idioms, jazz, and contemporary wedding music elements. A broad swath of red chiffon gracefully manipulated by the dancers suggests the wide cummerbund that is a requisite component of every Balkan man's traditional garb; when dancing, men frequently grasp the belts or cummerbunds of those next to them, creating an interlocked dance line that is also a metaphor of community relations. Thus the chiffon points to those social ties that bind, and whose value and fragility are so graphically illuminated by population displacement. On a more poetic level, the now taut, now supple fluidity of the undulating fabric captures at once the ebb and flow of these social relations over time and space, and the poised tension of the tango's movements and musical gestures.⁸

Ensemble Bŭlgare's Second National Revival

Two weeks prior to viewing *Refugees* I attended, at Sofia's Palace of Culture, the fifth-anniversary gala of the National Folkloric Ensemble Bŭlgare, an enormous company of ninety-eight artists founded by choreographer Hristo Dimitrov in October 2002 under the generous patronage of Danish entrepreneur Jan Anderson, who is married to Dimitrov's sister, Elena.⁹ Like Neshanŭl Art, Bŭlgare is essentially a dance troupe that has rejected the women's choirs which brought Bulgarian music to international attention early in the transition era, adopting a *Riverdance* model of more cost-efficient solo singers and instrumentalists instead.

A brief note of explanation is probably warranted here. As my previous work documents, in the late 1980s and early 1990s several professional women's choirs distinguished by their distinctive regional vocal qualities, such as that called *Le mystère des voix bulgares* (The mystery of the Bulgarian voices), toured North America, Europe, Australia, and Japan.¹⁰ Although the prototype for such choirs was the women's chorus of state-sponsored folk ensembles, whose other performance forces included a (typically male) folk orchestra of reconstructed local instruments and a dance troupe, these singers and their multipart compositions were marketed as a unique form of "authentic" world music and even ethnopop. After 1989, however, state support for these sprawling, Soviet-inspired collectives diminished almost completely, prompting their stranded remains to downsize, remodel, seek private sponsors, or dissolve. The overwhelmingly successful *Riverdance* phenomenon of the mid-1990s, in whose productions just a handful of instrumentalists participated—including the late Bulgarian *gŭdulka* (three-stringed bowed lyra) player Georgi Petrov—provided an inspiring new theatrical formula: foreground the dancers with sizzling choreographic displays, incorporate special effects, and contain the musical accompaniment to a few virtuosic soloists and a prerecorded soundtrack.

Bŭlgare is Bulgaria's first private folk ensemble and the first to be extensively bankrolled by a foreign sponsor, while also garnering the patronage of a significant number of local businesses. The group's lead vocalist, Albena Veskova, a former *Mystère des voix* soloist, is choreographer Dimitrov's wife. The anniversary gala that I viewed featured

scenes from the ensemble's first three major shows: *This Is Bulgaria*, an artistic tour through the country's folkloric regions; *Bulgaria through the Centuries*, which dramatizes key events in the nation's history; and *Albena*, which spotlights the singer's talents and the lifeworld of Bulgarian women from days of yore.¹¹ These titles, like the ensemble's name, hint at the group's overtly nationalistic and populist orientation. *Bǔlgare* (as distinct from *bǔlgari*) is an archaic in-group term connoting not the country's citizenry, but a camaraderie of the dominant ethnic group, Bulgarian Slavs, who are also strongly identified with Orthodox Christianity both because of the country's early conversion (in 865) and as a result of the Ottoman *millet* system, which classified the empire's subject population by faith. It is a term evocative of origins—one which conflates ethnicity, nation, and religion with historical claims to statehood, a trope reinforced by several of the ensemble's dramatic tableaux. Thus one friend with whom I discussed this term, a philologist by training, noted that *Bǔlgare*'s productions "emphasize THAT *natsiia*," the nation of *bǔlgare*, rather than the country's "other *etnosi*," such as Jews, Armenians, or Roma, which in this discourse emerge as ethnicities with no national entitlement.

In the slick, glossy, thirty-two-page promotional brochure distributed to the gala's audience Dimitrov describes himself as deeply religious, beginning each rehearsal by leading the entire company in prayer, and attributes the ensemble's success in part to his convictions.¹² For him, *Bǔlgare* seems not just a vocation, but a spiritual mission in the guise of an increasingly sprawling and influential corporation spearheaded by the *Bǔlgare* Foundation, of which he is president. Since 2005, the ideological centerpiece of this enterprise has been his "Second Bulgarian *Vǔzrazhdane*" (or Renaissance—hereafter SBV), which epitomizes *Bǔlgare*'s aesthetic and political intentions. The *Vǔzrazhdane* was the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century National Revival era of cultural, artistic, and educational development that raised national consciousness in anticipation of the modern Bulgarian nation-state, which also entailed establishing an independent Bulgarian Orthodox church. Its ideals were crucial to the emancipation efforts that ended Ottoman control in 1878—events that Bulgarians term the "Liberation." The fact that these efforts occasioned a revolutionary struggle to oust a (theocratic, Islamic, non-Slavic) empire prompts me to ponder what or whose hegemony Dimitrov's contem-

porary SBV is directed against. The chauvinistic inferences underlying Dimitrov's current campaign are hinted at in historian Mary Neuburger's observation that the socialist-era forced Slavicization and ethnic cleansing of Pomaks, Muslims, and ethnic Turks, euphemistically dubbed the "Rebirth" or "Regeneration Process" in local parlance, may be perceived as "akin to and an extension of" the nineteenth-century Revival.¹³ In effect, by espousing an essentialist, more-Bulgarian-than-the-Bulgarians ideal summarized in the company's very name, the ideological assumptions inherent in Dimitrov's SBV might be considered a further performative prolongation of the ethno-nationalist thinking that encouraged the "Rebirth Process." "It's one thing to applaud," maintains Dimitrov in the brochure's text, speaking about how the company's shows affect their audiences, "but completely different to claim after a 'Bŭlgare' production that you reject the proposition to work abroad and [opt to] remain in your homeland [instead]." "The supercilious attitude of foreigners toward Bulgaria and our people provokes me," he persists in the same somewhat xenophobic vein, paradoxically ignoring the fact that his chief financier is Danish. "The lack of knowledge among [most] Bulgarians concerning the wealth we possess provokes me."¹⁴

In 2005 Dimitrov's SBV campaign was officially ignited by the lighting of symbolic fires by prominent civic leaders, including then vice president, Angel Marin, signaling ideological patronage at the highest levels of government.¹⁵ These flames were passed, Olympiad-style, to every municipality and historical site in the country, originating with a torch held by a celebrated actor impersonating Khan Asparukh, who founded the Bulgarian state in 681.¹⁶ To quote Dimitrov, the SBV should "raise the self confidence and spirits of Bulgarians" at home and abroad, build pride in "the lives and achievements of [their] great fellow countrymen," and "sustain the fire lit by the ensemble in the souls of the people."¹⁷ Using sanctified language typically reserved for Liberation-era heroic icons such as Vasil Levski, who, until his death in 1873, was dubbed the Apostle of Freedom, in prerecorded commentary projected on a screen at the beginning of the gala Dimitrov explained that through their performances, Bŭlgare was serving as "an apostle for the whole country," so as to "preserve the Bulgarian spirit and national identity." The wording here is deliberately laden with symbolism. During the Liberation movement, the leaders of revolutionary

committees dispatched “apostles” to specific regional districts to foster a spirit of rebellion and spur preparation for forthcoming uprisings; these individuals are among the revolution’s most celebrated figures.¹⁸ Dimitrov’s remarks, a play on nationalist sentiment, paint Bŭlgare’s ideals in a similarly activist light.¹⁹

The Bŭlgare Foundation is to facilitate the SBV’s objectives through twelve initiatives, of which the eternal flame and ensemble itself are two, and all of which pertain to marketing a particular, SBV brand of aesthetic education.²⁰ Seminars for young people will promote Bulgarian folklore as the “Eighth Wonder of the World,” “charity spectacles” of “concrete intention” will entertain orphanages, and “elite schools of Bulgarian art” will support “young talent” in keeping with the Bŭlgare trademark. The foundation publishes its own glossy magazine, produces the ensemble’s CDs and DVDs, and seeks to restore specific historical monuments, lobby politicians to enact legislation pertinent to its goals, and promote innovative forms of tourism.

These endeavors brilliantly illustrate the “ethno-preneuralism” that John and Jean Comaroff explore in their 2009 book, *Ethnicity, Inc.*,²¹ whereby the expressive material—the distinctive products, practices, and paraphernalia—of ethnicity as culture industry, become brand-name commodities laden with a self-inflected affect of shared belonging born of people “seeing and sensing and listening to themselves enact their identity—and, in the process, objectifying their own subjectivity, thus to (re)cognize its existence, to grasp it, to domesticate it, to act on and with it.”²² Bŭlgare is essentially patenting a particular brand of and for the in-group, folkloric “ethno-futures” invested in an identity economy marketing, in this case, local lore to local folks, who in the process become tourists in their own land and consumers of its potentially transformative wares.²³ Although the results of such commodified self-identity displays can veer toward the parodic, the Comaroffs observe that they also appear to “(re)fashion identity, to (re)animate cultural subjectivity, to (re)charge collective self-awareness, to forge new patterns of sociality, all within the marketplace.”²⁴ These goals accord well with Bŭlgare’s mission of helping the Slavic majority rediscover and take more pride in a certain view of their heritage.

For example, in August 2009, Bŭlgare hosted its second Folkloric Costume Festival in the central Bulgarian village of Zheravna, an architectural preserve. Entry required traditional dress and leaving

behind anachronistic personal effects such as cell phones, watches, and lighters. Participants were promised an “exceptional authentic experience” dating back 150 years and, paradoxically, a somewhat regionally inappropriate, heterogeneous mix of Rhodope bagpipes, Macedonian *zurnas*, Turkish-style wrestling, eastern Thracian fire-walking, and a Dutch folk ensemble performance as entertainment.²⁵ As anthropologist Robert Foster has observed, commenting on the 1983 “Fête de France,” when it comes to heritage, “the state enjoys no monopoly on the objectification of the nation.”²⁶ To paraphrase his apt remarks further, substituting references to Bulgaria/n where he indicates France and the French, “through the consumption of [‘old Bulgaria’], objectified and commodified [in the Zheravna festival], consumers are promised nothing less than the possibility of national-personification, the appropriation of qualities deemed essentially [‘Bulgarian’] as attributes of personal identity.”²⁷

As alluded to above, prior to each performance of Bŭlgare’s two-hour gala, the ensemble’s chief staff and lead performers provided prerecorded prefatory commentary projected on two large stage-level screens. The gala’s apex, “Kocho,” was excerpted from *Bulgaria through the Centuries* and introduced on screen as the ensemble’s most “effective presentation.” “Kocho” is a folkloric dramatization of a wrenching poem by Ivan Vazov, one of the *Vŭzrazhdane*’s preeminent authors, for whom Sofia’s National Theater is named.²⁸ “Kocho” describes the heroic defense of Perushtitsa, a town in the Plovdiv district of south-central Bulgaria, in the Rhodope foothills, from well-armed Ottoman *bashibazuks* under the command of Ahmed Aga Tŭmrŭshliyata during the April Uprising of 1876. While some 400 of the population escape to Plovdiv, the remainder take shelter in the town’s Orthodox church, which fast becomes the site of a pitched battle. In the Bŭlgare dramatization of this event, the actors wield real guns while Russian-influenced *Vŭzrazhdane* march songs sound in the background.²⁹ As Ottoman irregulars bombard the sanctuary, destroying its belfry,³⁰ the Bulgarian revolutionary leaders, including Kocho Chistemenski, a shoemaker, kill their own wives and children, lest they become victims of atrocities, before turning their weapons on themselves. In the Bŭlgare rendition, as Kocho kneels dying, shaking and in great pain over the bodies of his loved ones, their souls rise up into what I can only describe as a Bulgarian paradise. The audience hears a large Rhodope bagpipe

(*kaba gaida*) and shepherd's bells. The scene on stage becomes a very sedately and beautifully danced Rhodope *rüchenitsa* in 7/8, authentic in choreography, music, and costuming.³¹ Kocho is reliving scenes from his life. He begins to dance happily with his sweetheart, courting her; suddenly, though, heaven disappears, the music shifts dramatically, and we realize that he is still dying. This was just a vision.³²

Before breathing his last, Kocho relives his wedding, the gravity of this scene only enriched by the well-established resonance between weddings and funerals in Bulgaria and throughout the region. This part of the narrative, like the rest of the tableau, is set to a Rhodope score by composer Milcho Vasilev, who teaches at Plovdiv's National Music Academy. All of its features—the large regional bagpipe; the bells, whose peals mark the drama's alternation between the gruesome reality of the church massacre and Kocho's ascension to heaven; the *rüchenitsa*; and later, an unmetered solo ballad or "slow song" (*bavna pesen*)—are musical tropes of the region, which is often linked to portrayals of Ottoman violence in folk ensemble productions and nationalistic discourse. At Bŭlgare's official fan site, program notes accompanying the "Rodopa" act of the *This Is Bulgaria* production remind us that these mountains were, "during the time of the Ottoman Empire, the arena of the largest spiritual battle between the Muslim faith and Christianity" and during the seventeenth century, the site of compulsory conversions to Islam. This is conventional rhetoric revitalized through performance, the heavenly depiction of Rodopa only serving to enhance the sense of its violation by infidels.

At the same time, Perushtitsa is truly among the most unspeakable episodes of the Bulgarian revolution; I have no desire to belittle its gravity. Together with similar pogroms at Batak and elsewhere, it sparked British opposition to Turkish policy and eventually prompted Russian intervention, culminating in Bulgaria's emancipation.³³ These atrocities are chronicled in a well-known nineteenth-century eyewitness account by activist and journalist Zahari Stoyanov, whose writings inspired Vazov's poetry.³⁴ Together, this literature constitutes a powerful node in the "ethno-myth" informing Bulgarian nationalistic discourse. My concern is that how Bŭlgare *engages* such historicized memories follows well-worn, socialist-era clichés that accord completely with the predominant views of many Eastern European historiographers. As historian Maria Todorova explains, these scholars have

tended to perceive nationalism as “the central trope of the modern period and focus almost exclusively on the emergence, maturation, and victory of national-liberation struggles, a grand narrative in which other processes and events figure only as background, side-effects, or conditions that favored or hampered the ongoing progression of the national movements.”³⁵ The approach is teleological, for it suggests that contemporary ethnic Bulgarians are the natural “achievement” of the history portrayed by Bŭlgare’s theatrical narratives.³⁶ These narratives draw upon works like “Kocho,” itself already an artistic metacommentary on the reality of the Ottoman experience, pulling them isochronically onto the contemporary stage to create a relationship of prideful solidarity between viewers and *Vŭzrazhdane*, one that reminds them of the superiority of the *ethnic* nation, and its mutual defense contra various empire-al legacies ranging from the Ottoman to the Soviet to the Mafia to the EU.³⁷ Returning to the Comaroffs,³⁸ Bŭlgare’s approach exercises both the primordial and instrumental positions from which ethnicity can arise, artistically inscribing “shared biology, ancestral origins, and innate disposition[s]” on the one hand (the primordial view, after Abner Cohen³⁹), while on the other, responding to perceived “threats to the integrity, interests, and self-determination of persons who, for one or another historical reason, come to imagine themselves as sharing a culturally rooted destiny” (the instrumentalist perspective; after Immanuel Wallerstein⁴⁰).

Unpacking this, the perceived menace here comes from both insiders and outsiders, from the collusion of government and organized crime, two decades of economic tumult implicated in EU politics, profound social change (spearheaded by an exiled and reimported president cum tsar), assertive demands by minorities for civil rights, a significant brain drain, and a worn-out, dispirited public. Several folk ensemble insiders with whom I spoke criticized the Bŭlgare productions as lacking quality or rehashing old socialist material. The whole thing is “a very pretty package,” said one friend, “all wrapped up in celophane,” but it “doesn’t have much value.”

Other Bulgarian acquaintances commented positively and negatively on the gala’s ideological aspects. Academic friends argued that the tableaux were “chauvinistic,” “racist,” and “stupid.” A musicologist colleague dubbed Bŭlgare’s outlook “complete totalitarianism,” and as promoting a “comfortable” version of national history. A colleague who

directs an ensemble went much further, exclaiming that in the present climate of intolerance, Bŭlgare's dramatizations were "playing with fire" and "very dangerous" in their potential to stir up ethno-nationalist sentiment.

For Bulgarian political scientist and East European Studies scholar Emilia Zankina, a former professional folk dancer, Bŭlgare's artistic ideology called to mind Site Bŭlgari Zaedno (or "All Bulgarians Together"), a popular restaurant, a publishing house, and, until it ceased production in September 2010, a television program broadcast by SKAT national television. SKAT, in turn, founded and openly supports the National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria (NFSB), an alternative political party whose goals, as described on SKAT's website, are "to rescue Bulgaria from political, economic and spiritual ruin and preserve national values and ideals. In [SKAT's] platform the principles of unification around patriotic causes, support for Eastern Orthodoxy, [and] opposition to *chalgalizirane* [*chalgaization*],⁴¹ demonstrative pornography, as well as the revision of Bulgarian history in the name of foreign interests, are pledged."⁴²

The motto and activities of Site Bŭlgari Zaedno fit well with this platform. The initiative's originator, Nikola Grigorov, emceed the eponymous TV program. Described as a "folkloric, informational, and entertaining broadcast" directed at popularizing Bulgarian music and dance, two of its more incendiary aims were "to reveal the true history of the Bulgarian people and to expose the falsifiers and thieves of our history," and "to unmask the butchers of the Bulgarian people, the perpetrators of the genocide continuing even today among the Bulgarians of Serbia, Greece, and the Serbo-Komintern concentration camp Macedonia." Indeed, a full-length painting of Grigorov in Macedonian dress holding the Bulgarian flag in his right hand and that of the VMRO in his left is positioned centrally in the restaurant, while music and dance from the Macedonian region comprise the backbone of Site Bŭlgari Zaedno's entertainment repertory, affording "All Bulgarians Together" a potentially politicized interpretation of suprastate cultural or ethnic alliances.⁴³ The Gotse Delchev ensemble, directed by Asen Pavlov,⁴⁴ was the broadcast's signature performer, while the website of Site Bŭlgari Zaedno promotes cassettes, CDs, and music videos of Macedonian music.

Designed to emulate a village tavern (*mehana*), the restaurant, located in downtown Sofia, features Bulgarian culinary favorites and

wines, tables set with traditional woven tablecloths and ceramic dinnerware, and live folk music and dancing, in which diners are encouraged to participate, led by costumed professionals. During the socialist era establishments of this sort provided entertainment for visiting tourists; many more appeared after 1989. What differentiates Site Bŭlgari Zaedno is the overt atmosphere of patriotic fervor that it cultivates: reproductions of iconic nationalistic paintings and portraits of celebrated revolutionaries and political leaders from the founding of the Bulgarian state and *Vŭzrazhdane* era line the walls, and a mustached mannequin of a late-nineteenth-century Bulgarian villager stands near the bar. Bulgarian flags bracketed above tables throughout the room are removed and waved by clients when gripped by nationalistic euphoria.

At least three other consultants, including an archeologist, a political scientist, and a musicologist, wondered whether Bŭlgare's production aesthetic might be fruitfully interpreted apropos the principles of Ataka (Attack), the ultranationalist, anti-Turkish, and anti-Romani political coalition that garnered more than 9 percent of the vote (21 of 240 seats) in the 2009 parliamentary elections.⁴⁵ Like Site Bŭlgari Zaedno, Ataka originated as a SKAT TV program in the early 2000s; the show's host, Volen Siderov, established the eponymous political party, which he continues to lead, in 2005. The party was championed by SKAT until, after a falling out, Siderov launched his own ALFA TV and RadioAtaka network, available to digital subscribers and via the Internet, while SKAT inaugurated the NFSB.⁴⁶ Ataka advocates withdrawing from NATO, new initiatives to surmount "the demographic collapse" resulting from emigration and the low birthrate among ethnic Bulgarians, and the preservation of Bulgarian language and national symbols through government sanctions.⁴⁷ Its protectionist platform is belied by its slogan: "Let's regain Bulgaria for the Bulgarians!" This refrain echoes a similar slogan ("Bulgaria for the Bulgarians, Turkey for the Turks!") used by protesters at rallies concerned with minority rights and the "national question" in 1990, shortly after the political transition.⁴⁸ For the political scientist, Ataka engaged in a kind of post-Communist nostalgia that appeals to the public's broader sense of cultural nationalism, even if the majority of that public placed its vote elsewhere. To her mind, it was this same cultural nationalism, underwritten with anti-minority sentiment, that helped account for Bŭlgare's popularity.

By contrast, many other interlocutors took a less politicized stance, contending that the concerts were entertaining and inspiring. One close friend in Sofia, a librarian, chastised me for taking the gala's content too seriously; to her, Bŭlgare's objective was to "boost people's self-confidence in this difficult time," and that "maybe this wasn't such a bad thing." In April 2009, the ensemble's *This Is Bulgaria* show was warmly received by the Chicago diaspora, who responded to some numbers with tears. Viewers on both sides of the Atlantic remarked that Bŭlgare made them feel "proud to be Bulgarian." Other Sofia acquaintances termed Bŭlgare's SBV of great importance in stemming the tide of an ethnopop culture whose sexualized and ethnically amalgamated and Turkish properties they found deeply troubling. Pointing to the ongoing debate concerning Muslim women's headscarves and the fact that the government had just voted against making Bulgarian language mandatory in schools, yet another dear friend, a senior administrative assistant in an academic institution, cautioned me to take these contested issues into consideration when interpreting the content of and reactions to Bŭlgare's performances.

And so it goes. That ethno-nationalist politics remain a grave concern being hashed out in government legislation, the popular culture arena, and everyday discourse is not surprising; that Bŭlgare is discussed in this context, however, is immensely significant. For me, there is an unsettling moral lining to Bŭlgare's productions that espouses an old-fashioned perception of citizenship which is equal parts geography and subjectivity, and which is contributing to a larger emergent, nostalgic, protectionist, ultranationalist, and even xenophobic discourse that links this ensemble with Ataka and "All Bulgarians Together" in my consultants' minds. Bŭlgare's activities entertain an exclusionary "moral geography" that maps the dominant ethnos onto an increasingly pluralistic or "hetero-national" landscape,⁴⁹ using criteria which, to quote Benjamin Orlove, "rather than being merely economic, sociological, or historical, include dimensions of ethical value."⁵⁰ To wit, when asked by the press whether "it is possible for folk song, creativity, [or] dance to help [Bulgarians] preserve [their] morals as a nation," Albena Veskova replied: "Yes, of course. This creativity especially helped Bulgarians survive in the grim years of [Ottoman] slavery, to preserve their faith for the future.... And in Ensemble Bŭlgare's three spectacles we demonstrate not only the beauty of Bulgarian dance and song, but also the

strength of the Bulgarian spirit and the high moral values that we want to bring home to the younger generation.”⁵¹ Through its ventures, then, the ensemble is also promoting what I would call a moral iconography of subjectivity—a certain way of thinking about how to be Bulgarian, a certain way of *appropriate* thinking, that suggests what is a permissible and even preferred way of constituting the self, here apropos the relation of ethnicity to citizenship and belonging.

Kutev at the *Crossroad*

Such dispositions contrast starkly with those currently embraced by the Kutev Ensemble, still “the” national folkloric troupe in that they remain the only socialist-era ensemble funded wholly by the Ministry of Culture. Together with its music director, composer and *gǔdulka* virtuoso Georgi Andreev, and its chief choreographer, Ivailo Ivanov, artistic director Elena Kuteva has recently launched two innovative premieres, *Wild Strawberries* in 2003 and *Crossroad* in 2008, that purposefully divorce “national” from the “nation,” confronting audiences with an inclusionary, federated perspective on citizenship—and the ensemble’s craft—instead. This moral geography reterritorializes the Bulgarian abstraction by placing it amid overlapping, contingent, subnational, and transnational solidarities, which transcend the older ethno-national boundaries suggested by socialist-era folklore and, through the beauty of their staging, are endowed with positive value.

As Andreev asserted in one of our many interviews, the Kutev approach advocates “tolerance and friendship.” It emphasizes that “everyone who lives [in Bulgaria] shares something.” *Wild Strawberries* seeks inspiration in the country’s many minority and cross-border populations—Armenians, Pomaks, Greeks, Macedonians, Jews, Roma, and the once nomadic transhumant Sarakastani (Karakachani) herders. One orchestral composition, “The Route of the Argonauts,” features dueling solo *gǔdulkas* played in the style of Pontic lyras, a deliberate musical glance to the east, rather than the west, that sets Bulgaria’s implication within Black Sea lifeways in sharp musical relief. Andreev explains: “Many ethnic groups in the Mediterranean region use the *gǔdulka* under different names. So I used intonations from the town of Trabizond. The town is in Turkey but its population [dates] from

Hellenic times, and maybe even from [that of] the Argonauts. They started from Asia Minor and then traveled along the southern coast of the Black Sea.... This piece is a geographic musical tour.”

But “Argonauts” is remarkable for more than its musical content. When I saw the work performed in May 2007, the soloists were both female: Violeta Petkova and Hristina Beleva are the orchestra’s lead *gŭdulka* players.⁵² My research indicates that in contradistinction to past gender conventions, the *gŭdulka* is slowly becoming a female instrument, even in professional circles. But the Kutev management’s decision to hire, in addition to classically trained bassist Nora Bobeva (employed by the ensemble since the 1980s), not one, but three *gŭdularki* since 2002, and to put two of them center stage in *Wild Strawberries*, illustrates that, as Bobeva put it, they have “broken this barrier” for professional folkloric performance.

“We wanted to create a new show revealing the ensemble’s potential,” Andreev told me, “and we wanted to make the show unusual, even shocking.” Yet both *Wild Strawberries* and *Crossroad* were met with mixed reactions by viewers in the press, online forums, blogs, and YouTube commentary, some claiming that the heterogeneous blending of “non-Bulgarian folklore,” which they frequently interpreted as Turkish or Middle Eastern no matter its origin, would have the organization’s creator, Philip Kutev, rolling in his grave. Here it becomes clear that, like Bŭlgare’s productions, the Kutev Ensemble’s recent shows have served as a touchstone for ethno-national debate framed by the stresses of postsocialist life worlds. “The music is sooner Vlach, the costumes Arab.... I don’t see anything Bulgarian in this performance,” said one YouTube commentator about a *Crossroad* number portraying a Pontic men’s dance (discussed below) that might be considered a further creative elaboration on the Argonautical trail. Another, suggesting that the show’s “ethnic outbursts” disgraced national art, called on the Ministry of Culture to demand the resignation of Elena Kuteva.⁵³ In other words, the show was not “Bulgarian” enough in the sense projected by Ensemble Bŭlgare. While several viewers simply lamented the absence of the old socialist-era warhorses they had grown accustomed to hearing performed regularly in years past, others congratulated the ensemble for finally having broken the mold of former stereotypes. “‘Philip Kutev’ is once again ‘Philip Kutev,’” exclaimed folklorist Georg Kraev in an incisive review, reminding readers that

when the ensemble was founded in 1951, it entailed radical changes in performance practice then, too.⁵⁴ Now, sixty years later, these earlier modifications were accepted as traditional to the point of cliché.

In a press interview published in October 2007 Andreev characterized *Crossroad* as an attempt to convey “the common roots of Balkan culture and the enormous variety of distant influences upon it over the centuries.”⁵⁵ “Because in practice,” he explained to me a year later, “it’s not exactly that you have a road that comes and crosses here, but rather that it’s the windiest place in the Balkans, so to speak—that place that has the most cultural encounters.” “The ensembles were blind,” he told me, “regarding what context Bulgarian music is located in. [It’s] located in the context of Turkish, Greek, Vlach music—in general, it should be taken in a Mediterranean context, because it’s a little bit broader than [the Balkans].” Ultimately, “crossroad” simply designates “parallels between endlessly distant, diametric cultures that in a given moment intersect with one another.”

Thus while the musical reach of *Wild Strawberries* did not extend past the state’s ethnic boundaries, the content of *Crossroad* is purposefully borderless. Costumes are at once fantastical and ethnically inspired stylizations of regional and historical models. While the primary substance of the production derives from Bulgarian lore, Andreev deliberately included elements from elsewhere in part to appeal to international audiences. The show, he related, resists the “grandiose,” “pretentious” productions typical of the ensemble in the late 1980s, which he likened to grand opera. By contrast, *Crossroad* is designed for touring; it, too, eschews a full folk choir in favor of just four vocalists. These are joined by twenty-four dancers and ten musicians who double their Bulgarian instruments with Greek *bouzouki*, guitar, clarinet, Armenian *duduk*, and *zurna*. The resulting timbral palette is further broadened by a prerecorded, synthesized soundtrack utilizing a full symphony orchestra and electronic samples, all of which is coordinated with impressionistic visual images projected on wall-to-wall screens behind the ensemble in performance.

Crossroad’s sixteen numbers comprise a montage linked by the notion of a soaring, wind-borne, bird’s-eye view of an unbordered Balkans. The show opens with a poignant solo *gǔdulka* improvisation, “Aoidos,” played by Andreev himself against imagery of an eagle in flight over a Balkan mountain range.⁵⁶ Autumn leaves adrift on air

currents swirl gently, littering the ground like the mix of cultural influences—the winds—from which the production draws inspiration. “The Adamants,”⁵⁷ a men’s dance whose choreography emulates eagles in flight and fight, immediately follows; in Balkan folk songs men and the poetics of manhood are often represented by noble birds such as the eagle and falcon. Andreev, emulating a blind minstrel of the past, appropriately accompanies this number by singing a west Bulgarian (Shop) epic song in whose lyrics the eagle figures prominently.⁵⁸ The bird’s musical flight spans not just places, but points in time, while Andreev as Orpheus personifies living history, a witness to its events at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, past and present. “On white wings,” one of the production’s signature songs, extends the metaphor, while also illuminating the continuing importance of the Black Sea as a pivotal locus for the ensemble’s current artistry; the costumes donned by the female dancers for this piece draw upon the Caucasus for inspiration.⁵⁹ One might argue that in *Crossroad*, the metaphorical eagle, if not Andreev himself, is the argonaut; the show’s midpoint, and in many ways its musical climax, is “Toward Colchis” (“Kŭm kolhida”), his vigorous solo rendering of Black Sea lyra tunes for an equally virtuosic Pontic men’s line dance (*horon*), replete with representative costuming and shoulder-shimmying choreography.⁶⁰

Crossroad’s stylistic embrace of intercultural “breezes” is further illustrated by the lighthearted “Wind from the South Sea,” which captures the Greek coastline in costuming, rhythmic groove, modality, melodic gesture, and instrumentation, combining a bouzouki *taxim* and *rebab*-like *gŭdulka* solo with an occasional shimmer from a sampled Indian *sitar* and a lyrical vocalise in an almost world pop package.⁶¹ In conversation Andreev laughingly characterized the result as “a little bit ‘Bollywood’” and “a little bit Cypriot along a parallel from Indonesia to Greece.” The solo vocals comprise only vocables, contributing to an aura of tropicalia devoid of place.

In its embrace of regional eclecticism *Crossroad* does not reject Bulgarian lore, as several YouTube commentators have argued, but even more conventional folkloric topics are rendered in an innovative fashion. “Catharsis” portrays the ecstatic healing dance of the entranced *nestinarka*, or fire-walker, who steps artfully through the coals bearing an icon of Saint Constantine or Elena in early June each year. In Bulgaria this custom exists only in the Strandzha subregion

of eastern Thrace; in this musical setting, the duple meter, melodic motives, two-bar phrasing, rhythmic intensity, choreographic gestures, and prominence of the bagpipe (*gaida*) and drum (*tūpan*) are all completely in keeping with village practice. However, the very staging of such a religious topic, with the overt Christian symbolism of the drama's final moments, in which the female soloist becomes the icon, held aloft by the male dancers, her body assuming the figure of Christ on the cross, represent a radical departure from previous norms. The arrangement, too, is innovative; rather than enveloping the bagpipes in the usual fabric of the folk orchestra, the composer employs symphonic resources to their fullest extent, the results moving beyond experiment to organic synthesis.⁶²

The Kutev Ensemble's rendering of fire dancing is significant of the growing local attention to cosmology manifest in popular culture, theater, expanded religious practice, and the revival of older customs pertaining to nature worship over the last twenty years. "Lost Souls," which appears in the *Crossroad* program shortly after "Toward Colchis," is also symptomatic of this trend, while further illustrating the cinematic quality of Andreev's compositional style, much in evidence throughout the production.⁶³ The piece, he told me, represents an encounter between various systems of devotional chant that have touched Bulgarian spirituality through the centuries, from Byzantine Orthodoxy, to Turkish Sufism, to the *Dies Irae* of the Gregorian world. Both the costumes and sedate spinning of the dancers allude to the Mevlevi *ayın*—the sacred dance rite of Konya's "whirling dervishes"—but here the full white skirts representing the shrouds of the dervishes' egos are replaced by black, in keeping with the darkened, misty, midnight blue of the stage set. An Australian didgeridoo sample provides additional timbral and spiritual depth, shadowing the evocative timbre of an Armenian *duduk*, which Andreev told me serves as scribe and hence witness throughout, recording decisive events over the ages.

Today, therefore, the Kutev Ensemble no longer presents itself as the state's representative of the *ethnic* nation, but as an inclusive, artistic ensemble of national stature whose performances are inspired by folkloric idioms—of resident and non-resident *nations*. This conceptual sea change is evident in how the group's very name has evolved since 1989: from "the" *Dŭrzhaven* Ensemble for *Narodni* Songs and Dances—Philip Kutev" (where *dŭrzhaven* signifies "state"—a socialist euphe-

mism indicative of governmental sponsorship and ideological ties—and *narodni* means “folk,” but also “[ethno-]national” or “people’s”—another socialist euphemism fundamental to constructions of tradition and authenticity) to the “National [*natsionalen*] Folkloric [*folkloren*] Ensemble ‘Philip Kutev,’” a moniker whose terminology emulates the language of international performance.⁶⁴ It has turned the socialist-era jargon of *narodno tvorchestvo* (national or people’s artistry) inside out, espousing, rather, the artistry of the peoples—plural.⁶⁵

Beyond Nation? Performativity, Belonging, and the Power of the Subjunctive

Before concluding, I would like to hazard one more theoretical point concerning why I think cultural performances like the three productions discussed above are important in understanding Bulgaria in 2010 and what they mean. For me, the most intriguing aspect of Victor Turner’s classic theorization of liminality is his observation that liminal states—liminal moments, really—are replete with the potentiality of the emergent and as such, are also the locus of learning, metamorphosis, and creativity.⁶⁶ It is this capacity that allows ritual to invert, subvert, contravene, exaggerate, or transcend the normative social order, turning everyday reality inside out, and, as I have argued elsewhere, that might help us understand how citizens of the Balkans are appropriating a largely negative discourse of Balkanism—one that pivots on a regional *ontology* of liminality—as a source of artistic enrichment and political empowerment.⁶⁷ To my mind it is the subjunctive quality of liminality that is key here.⁶⁸ Liminoid phenomena, the concrete aesthetic and artistic consequences of liminal creativity, project imagined possibilities into subjunctive experiences that play out, through performance, the what if, would be, could be, and could/would/should-have-been-if-only scenarios of liminal inclinations.⁶⁹ National consciousness, I have come to think, is forged in the subjunctive mood—conceived in and apropos the crucible of the subjunctive. As liminoid phenomena, each of these productions is conjuring an alternative Bulgarian state, an alternative sense of citizenship or identity consciousness, into being. They are performative social dramas which, by dint of reflexivity, mimesis, repetition, and artistic powers of persuasion, carry a certain

illocutionary force to (re)shape society.⁷⁰ This might be particularly true of the Kutev Ensemble, whose prestigious heritage as a national icon lends its productions considerable gravitas. In such productions, observes Thomas Solomon, “where the social relations at stake in identity formation are made the center of attention,” performance can serve as “an arena for experimenting with, trying out, and ‘trying on’ new identities.”⁷¹ Performance creates “presence,” writes Edward Schieffelin. “Performances, whether ritual or dramatic, create and make present realities vivid enough to beguile, amuse, or terrify. And through these presences, they alter moods, social relations, bodily dispositions, and states of mind.”⁷²

But herein lies a twofold peril. The potential of performance to create presence or restructure social relations is only as powerful as the performance is persuasive, and the production, popular. The success of any performative act is always inherently contingent, its effectiveness mired in risk of poor execution or audience miscommunication. The outcome is unpredictable, even as the act itself may be directed at exploring or fixing a new reality. In Schieffelin’s words, “the power of performativity turns crucially on its *interactive* edge.”⁷³ When the artistic slips into artifice the play of the subjunctive becomes more hypothetical, parodic, or even predatory than aspirational.⁷⁴ I mean this in two ways that are linked to audience reception and authorial or actors’ intent. Audiences unable to suspend disbelief in the face of a dramatic production remain unswayed by its messages. They understand or dismiss the production’s narrative as more hypothetical, as satire, or as fantasy—a kind of artful, if not entertaining or humorous deception, to whose reality construct they do not aspire. But when performances “work”—that is, when the strategically executed behaviors of actors, who may or may not subscribe to the tale world they enact, trigger in auditors a strong sense of identification—the resulting “suspension of disbelief” can leave publics deeply moved, inspired, entranced, thoroughly entertained, repulsed, or vulnerable to manipulation—a second peril.⁷⁵ This seems particularly true when the truths or emergent realities that narratives weave dramatically affirm, refute, or play on the heartstrings of the essentialisms of belief: national mythologies, religious doctrine, sacred symbology, conventional wisdom, or received histories. It is in such situations, through the imaginative play and transformative possibilities of the subjunc-

tive, that social power dynamics may be exposed and exploited, political or national consciousness aroused or redefined, and social action incited—toward positive or unsavory ends.⁷⁶ Indeed, Turner himself recognized this volatility, what he called liminality's "darker valences and potentials," stating that "performative genres ... live on the edge of volcanoes."⁷⁷ Each of the ensembles examined here draws upon a similar discursive pool of history and lore in fashioning their productions; indeed, there are numerous mutual influences and relationships of personnel, subject matter, choreography, and music between them. However, the extent to which, and intention with which they each challenge, embrace, flout, or transcend the conventional order in the realization of their artistry differs remarkably, and carries divergent implications.

In sum, the material and sonic culture of folklore supplies multivalent sign vehicles for today's artists, who mold them in presentational contexts suffused with meaning such that viewers self-identify with or reject the qualities displayed and heard to, in the words of anthropologist Katherine Verdery, "feel themselves national."⁷⁸ Bŭlgare's shows traffic in timeworn but disturbingly powerful appeals to an ethno-nationalist sentiment laced with post-Communist nostalgia and steeped in what Emilia Zankina terms "entrepreneurial populism."⁷⁹ By contrast, those like Robeva's *Refugees* sidestep and extend the concept of nation by repositioning local choreography in a diaspora of venues and genres. Most strikingly, the Kutev Ensemble, through strategically composed and choreographed works that call upon diverse regional and international folkloric and popular culture styles, including those of neighbors and minorities, is deliberately performing against gender and ethno-nationalist stereotypes in favor of productions cosmopolitan in form and postnationalist in content. In so doing, they are redefining "national" folklore in defiance of a lingering socialist-era cultural policy legacy, probing reterritorialized and even supranational social formations that "transgress the national order of things" as alternative premises for situating subjectivity and understanding citizenship.⁸⁰ As anthropologist Maple Razsa observes in a recent review article addressing "competing narratives of ownership and belonging" on the Istrian peninsula, while regionalisms and hybrid identity constructs are certainly "no guarantor of tolerance and openness," they at least offer "the possibility of such relations."⁸¹ Here's to possibilities.

NOTES

- 1 Theodora Dragostinova and Yana Hashamova, "Introduction," this volume.
- 2 An expanded version of this chapter appears as "Beyond Nation? A Thrice-Told Tale from Bulgaria's Postsocialist Soundstage," *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 30.1 (2015). Research for this study was funded by the University of Illinois Campus Research Board (2007–2008) and the Fulbright-Hays Foundation (2009–2010), which I gratefully acknowledge. Earlier drafts were presented at the 54th Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Mexico City, the University of Pittsburgh, the American Research Center in Sofia, and Ohio State University; my analysis has benefitted greatly from collegial commentary in each of these venues. In Sofia, I am deeply indebted to Snezhanka Borisova, Neshka Robeva, and Emilia Zankina, as well as Elena Kuteva, Ivailo Ivanov, Hristina Beleva, Violeta Petkova, Nora Bobeva, my many other colleagues in the Kutev Ensemble's folk orchestra, and especially Georgi Andreev, the ensemble's music director and conductor, for their support of and patience with my ethnographic work. I am very grateful for the gift of their time, wisdom, friendship, and music. Any errors of interpretation are my own.
- 3 Benjamin Orlove, "Editorial: Identity, Temporality, and Moral Geographies," *Current Anthropology* 45.1 (2004), 2.
- 4 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 37–39.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 39.
- 6 See <http://www.neshkaart.com>.
- 7 Cf. Robert J. Foster, "Making National Cultures in the Global Ecumene," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 20 (1991), 244.
- 8 Excerpts from several *Bezantsi* numbers may be viewed at <http://youtu.be/weih3PVaO08> and <http://youtu.be/2Nzr7Hfe-h0>. A few still photographs and the promotional poster from the production can be seen at <http://www.neshkaart.com>.
- 9 Anonymous, "5 Tŭrzhestven spektakŭl po sluchai 5-godishnata na Natsionalen Folklore Ansambŭl Bŭlgare" [2008?], 5.
- 10 See Donna A. Buchanan, "Bulgaria's Magical Mystère Tour: Postmodernism, World Music Marketing, and Political Change in Eastern Europe," *Ethnomusicology* 41.1 (1997), 131–157; Buchanan, *Performing Democracy: Bulgarian Music and Musicians in Transition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 341–425. See also Carol Silverman, "'Move over Madonna': Gender, Representation, and the 'Mystery' of Bulgarian Voices," in *Over the Wall/After the Fall: Post-Communist Cultures through an*

- East–West Gaze*, ed. Sibelan Forrester et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 212–237.
- 11 Anonymous, 5–6, 10–11, 16–17.
 - 12 Anonymous, 12.
 - 13 Mary Neuburger, *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 79–80. See also Donna A. Buchanan, “Wedding Musicians, Political Transition, and National Consciousness in Bulgaria,” in *Retuning Culture: Musical Changes in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Mark Slobin (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 200–230; Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); and Yana Hashamova’s discussion of the film *Stolen Eyes* (*Otkradnati ochi*), this volume.
 - 14 Anonymous, 12.
 - 15 As of 2008, the movement had 1,150 registered supporters, including 22 businessmen, 28 journalists, and about 100 government officials. See Anonymous 22, 24.
 - 16 Anonymous, 22, 24.
 - 17 Anonymous, 20, 23.
 - 18 Mercia Macdermott, *A History of Bulgaria, 1393–1885* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962), 206, 233, 243.
 - 19 Anonymous, 24. On Vasil Levski as a divine figure of the *Vŭzrazhdane* and 1989 political transition, see Buchanan, *Performing Democracy*, 30–33, and especially Maria Todorova, *Bones of Contention: The Living Archive of Vasil Levski and the Making of Bulgaria’s National Hero* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2009).
 - 20 Anonymous, 23.
 - 21 John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 51.
 - 22 Ibid., 26.
 - 23 Ibid.
 - 24 Ibid.
 - 25 See <http://www.bulgare.net> and <http://www.nosia.bg>.
 - 26 Foster, “Making National Cultures,” 249.
 - 27 Foster, “Making National Cultures,” 249–250.
 - 28 “Kocho” appears in Ivan Vazov’s anthology “Epic of the Forgotten” (“Epopeyata na zabravenite”); Ivan Vazov, *Liricheski i epicheski stihotvoreniya, 1879–1881* (Plovdiv and Sofia: Hristo G. Danova, 1881), 59–63. For an English translation, see Ivan Vazov, *Selected Poems*, trans. Peter Tempest (Sofia: Sofia Press, 1976), 34–38.
 - 29 See the ensemble’s trailer for this production at <http://youtu.be/F0XRB-NYMFLM> (the scene in question begins at 3:10).

- 30 The destruction of the belfry signaled the imminent collapse of the building; it also carries important political and religious significance, as the Ottoman regime only permitted belfries in the later *Vŭzrazhdane*.
- 31 The *rŭchenitsa* is performed throughout Bulgaria in association with weddings and other festivities.
- 32 For a substantial excerpt see <http://youtu.be/NYpBGIVP1V8>.
- 33 Macdermott, *A History of Bulgaria*, 264–293.
- 34 Zahari Stoyanov, *Extracts from Notes on the Bulgarian Uprisings* (Sofia: Sofia Press, 1976), 11, 112–141.
- 35 Maria Todorova, “The Trap of Backwardness: Modernity, Temporality, and the Study of Eastern European Nationalism.” *Slavic Review* 64.1 (2005), 148.
- 36 Foster, “Making National Cultures,” 241, after Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (London: Verso, 1985), 148.
- 37 On isochronism, see Todorova, “The Trap of Backwardness,” 155.
- 38 Comaroff and Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.*, 39.
- 39 Abner Cohen, “Introduction: The Lesson of Ethnicity,” in *Urban Ethnicity*, ed. Abner Cohen (London: Tavistock, 1974), 12.
- 40 Immanuel Wallerstein, “Social Conflict in Post-Independence Black Africa: The Concepts of Race and Status Group Reconsidered,” in *Racial Tensions and National Identity*, ed. Ernest Campbell (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1972).
- 41 *Chalgalizirane* denotes the widespread popularization of *chalga* or *popfolk* and the social values that it promotes. *Popfolk* is a post-transition popular culture genre melding Bulgarian musical idioms with those of other Balkan states; Romani artists and Romani and Turkish influences figure strongly in its performance, and the dancing, women’s dress styles, song lyrics, and video imagery associated with the genre have been criticized as sexually suggestive or of poor quality.
- 42 See <http://www.skat.bg/nfsb.php>.
- 43 The VMRO is the *Vŭtreshna makedonska revolyutsionna organizatsiya*, or Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, dedicated broadly to cultivating ethnic Macedonian nationalism and Macedonian independence efforts, and acknowledging or nurturing cultural ties between ethnic Macedonians inside and outside the Republic.
- 44 Delchev is celebrated as a late-nineteenth-century Bulgaro-Macedonian revolutionary and nationalist active in Ottoman Macedonia; the city of Gotse Delchev, in Bulgaria’s Pirin-Macedonia region, bears his name. Asen Pavlov is a prominent choreographer who has also worked with the Kutev Ensemble and the Sofia-based folkloric ensemble “Chinari.” See http://dancerbg.host56.com/horeografi_asen_pavlov_biography.html.

- 45 See Popova, this volume, and Silverman, *Romani Routes*, 12–13.
- 46 See Televiziya Alfa, <http://www.ataka.tv/> and <http://www.radioataka.net>.
- 47 Ataka Political Party, “Twenty Principles of ATAKA Political Party,” http://www.ataka.bg/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=27.
- 48 Buchanan, *Performing Democracy*, 306–308.
- 49 On “hetero-nationhood,” see Comaroff and Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.*, 47–48.
- 50 Benjamin Orlove, “Editorial: Identity, Temporality, and Moral Geographies.” *Current Anthropology* 45.1 (2004), 2.
- 51 Anonymous, 18.
- 52 For a live performance of “Via Argonavtika” featuring Hristina Beleva and Violeta Petkova as soloists go to <http://youtu.be/d6hrMQJE6xQ>.
- 53 Posted by todorburgas at <http://hk.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmEqaf5OJnY> in association with the Crossroad number “Harpies and Asparukh.” For additional remarks, see “Obyavyavane na sūbitieto KRŪSTOPŪT—Premierno predstavlenie,” 27 May 2008, <http://horo.bg/index.php?menunode=9&show=material&materialid=1038>.
- 54 Georg Kraev, “Na krūstopūt kato na Krūstopūt.” *Kultura* 22 (2505), 13 June 2008, <http://www.kultura.bg/bg/article/view/14417>.
- 55 Balkanfolk Team, “‘Krūstopūt’: Premiera na Ansambŭl ‘Filip Kutev,’” <http://www.balkanfolk.com/bg/news.php?id=109>.
- 56 To hear this performance, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X03th3-LEOM>.
- 57 The Bulgarian title of this number is “Neprištŭpnite,” meaning “those who are as impregnable—as hard and enduring—as adamant”; in the context of this work, the word suggests the resolute quality of the Bulgarian epic hero or *yunak* (and by extension, of the Bulgarian people), as persevering and unyielding as the mountain cliffs, and as unassailable as the eagles who roost on them. For a live performance, see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4On5e_sOZE.
- 58 The Shop epos was once accompanied by a lyra, whether the *gŭdulka* or the now extinct (in Bulgaria) *gusla*. “Aoidos,” the title of the *gŭdulka* improvisation leading seamlessly into “The Adamants,” is from the Greek, meaning an oral epic singer.
- 59 See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwmrIsWN1fA>. Particularly at issue are the headdresses, whose circular, flat-topped hats and billowing gossamer veils (here, the “white wings” of the choreography) share resemblances with traditional women’s dress of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, as do the dancers’ long sleeves.
- 60 For a live performance of “Toward Colchis,” also now called “The Golden Fleece,” go to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_HDV9ZmQCY. Col-

- chis was an ancient kingdom of western Georgia, the home of Medea and the Golden Fleece.
- 61 This number, also called simply “The Southern Sea,” can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxZQZM308zo>.
- 62 “Catharsis” may be viewed at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Erf_K1FiLF4.
- 63 See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1vBjfxAA0>.
- 64 See Buchanan, *Performing Democracy*, 33–39 and 165–166.
- 65 See also Georg Kraev, “Na krüstopüt,” who makes a similar point.
- 66 Victor Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbolology,” in *The Anthropological Study of Human Play*, ed. E. Norbeck, special issue of *Rice University Studies* 60.3 (1974), 53–92.
- 67 See Donna A. Buchanan, “Preface and Acknowledgments,” in *Balkan Popular Culture and the Ottoman Ecumene: Music, Image, and Regional Political Discourse*, ed. Donna A. Buchanan (Lanham: Scarecrow, 2007), xvii–xviii, xxv–xxvii; and Maple Razsa and Nicole Lindstrom, “Balkan Is Beautiful: Balkanism in the Political Discourse of Tuđman’s Croatia,” *East European Politics and Societies* 18.4 (2004), 628–650.
- 68 On cultural performance, social drama, liminality, and subjunctivity, see Roger D. Abrahams, “Ordinary and Extraordinary Experience,” in *The Anthropology of Experience*, ed. Victor W. Turner and Edward M. Bruner (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 68, and especially Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1988), 25, 41–42, 101–102, 107.
- 69 Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, 169. These remarks were likewise inspired in part by Maria Todorova’s perceptive observations about “lag,” “lack,” and temporal acceleration, or “catching up” with “one’s own ‘might have been,’” as distinctive qualities of East European nationalisms; see “The Trap of Backwardness,” 160; cf., also, Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 16–18.
- 70 See Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs, “Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19 (1990), 62–66; and Lawrence E. Sullivan, “Sound and Senses: Toward a Hermeneutics of Performance,” *History of Religions* 26.1 (1986), 9.
- 71 Thomas Solomon, “Performing Indigeneity: Poetics and Politics of Music Festivals in Highland Bolivia,” in *Soundscapes from the Americas: Ethnomusicological Essays on the Power, Poetics, and Ontology of Performance*, ed. Donna A. Buchanan (London: Ashgate, 2014), 144.
- 72 Edward Schieffelin, “Problematizing Performance,” in *Ritual, Performance, Media*, ed. Felicia Hughes-Freeland (London: Routledge, 1998), 194.

- 73 Ibid., 200, and 196–198.
- 74 Kyle Carmack, personal communication.
- 75 Schieffelin, “Problematizing Performance,” 200–205.
- 76 See Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 23, 26.
- 77 Quoted in John J. MacAloon, “Introduction: Cultural Performances, Culture Theory,” in *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, ed. John J. MacAloon (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984), 14.
- 78 See Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life*, 2.
- 79 Emilia Zankina, personal communication (2010). See also Boris Gurov and Emilia Zankina, “Populism and the Construction of Political Charisma: Post-Transition Politics in Bulgaria.” *Problems of Post-Communism* 60/61 (2013), 3–17.
- 80 Akhil Gupta, “The Song of the Nonaligned World: Transnational Identities and the Reinscription of Space in Late Capitalism.” *Cultural Anthropology* 7.1 (1992), 64.
- 81 Maple Razsa, “Regionalism, Memory and Belonging at the Frontiers of the Nation-State.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 77.1 (2004), 161, 165 (review of Pamela Ballinger, *History in Exile: Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003]).

CHAPTER 10

Who Brought Ataka to the Political Scene? Analysis of the Vote for Bulgaria's Radical Nationalists

Maria Popova

Even a casual observer of Bulgarian politics can quickly recognize that the Ataka Party promotes a racist, anti-capitalist, and anti-Euro-Atlantic political agenda. However, we know much less about the individuals who made Ataka's political breakthrough possible—the voters who supported Ataka in the 2005 parliamentary elections. Do Ataka sympathizers blame minorities for Bulgaria's problems as much as the party's leader, Volen Siderov, does? Are they radical nationalists who reject multiparty democracy, capitalism, and Bulgaria's integration in the European Union (EU) and NATO? Do their attitudes differ significantly and predictably from those of other voters and non-voters?

This chapter uses quantitative analysis of individual-level data on voting preferences, attitudes, and socioeconomic background to show that the voters who first brought Ataka to the political scene in 2005 do not differ dramatically from the average Bulgarian voter. They come from all walks of life, from different ethnic backgrounds, from large cities and rural areas alike. They do not snub democracy, the market, and European integration. Even their rejection of the right of the Turkish-minority-supported party, Movement for Rights and Freedoms (Dvizhenie za prava i svobodi, or DPS), to participate in politics, as reprehensible as it may be from a liberal democratic standpoint, does not differentiate them from the typical Bulgarian voter. What makes Ataka voters stand out from the rest of the Bulgarian electorate is their profound dissatisfaction with the political establishment. Ataka voters

profess the most negative assessment of all of Bulgaria's post-Communist cabinets.

These findings help contextualize the Ataka phenomenon in the broader political landscape of Bulgaria's post-Communist democracy. They suggest that rather than a resurgence of age-old interethnic hatreds, the rise of Ataka in 2005 reflects the very contemporary disappointment of a portion of the Bulgarian electorate with the mainstream political parties. As Yana Hashamova and Theodora Dragostinova argue in the introduction to this volume, nationalism "sometimes functioned as a rhetorical strategy that pursues other practical goals." In this case, Ataka's virulent nationalist discourse, whether sincerely espoused by its leaders or not, seems to have been used by Ataka's voters to protest the political behavior of the mainstream parties. Thus, Ataka was initially not only, and perhaps not primarily, a vehicle for nationalist mobilization, but an outlet for voters' political disillusionment. In an ironic twist, as the Muslim women that Yana Hashamova discusses in her chapter demonstrate their independence and challenge state-imposed narratives, Ataka's supporters use their votes to challenge and shock the political establishment by sending radicals to parliament.

What Is Ataka and Who Is Volen Siderov?

Ataka, the political party, originated from an eponymous cable TV show by Volen Siderov. In the early 1990s, Siderov was the editor-in-chief of *Demokratiya*, the daily newspaper of the anti-Communist Union of Democratic Forces (UDF). On the pages of *Demokratiya*, Siderov promoted shock therapy, minority rights, and Euro-Atlantic integration, the standard UDF neo-liberal position. Then, somewhere along the lines of the UDF's numerous regroupings after the collapse of the UDF government in 1993, Siderov fell by the wayside and his political and journalistic career hit a rough patch. In the 1990s, he briefly served as a press secretary for Overgaz (an oil company infamous for its Mafia connections), studied theology at a provincial seminary, and even posed nude for a lifestyle magazine. In 2001, Siderov attempted to join the ranks of Simeon Saxe-Gotha's newly founded National Movement Simeon the Second (Nationalno Dvizhenie Simeon Vtori, or NDSV) and run on NDSV's party list in his native

Yambol, but he struck out. He alleges he did not make it onto the party list because he could not buy his spot.¹

In 2003, Siderov ran for mayor of Sofia on an ideologically non-descript, “Clean-up!” platform, but garnered only about 2,000 votes. In the early 2000s, Siderov started reinventing himself as a racist, anti-Semitic nationalist. He wrote three books, which sold poorly. *Bumerangut na Zloto* (Evil’s boomerang, 2003), and *Vlastta na Mamona* (Mammon’s power, 2004), rehashed anti-Semitic and anti-American conspiracy theories about a Communist Jewish “Holocaust” against Orthodox Slavs and Jewish world domination through American banks. *Bulgarophobia* (2003), named all those responsible for the negative externalities of Bulgaria’s democratic transition; severe recession, hyperinflation, rising crime and unemployment, deteriorating health care and other services. Siderov identifies a very long list of “national traitors and foreign Bulgaro-haters, who experiment on the backs of the Bulgarians who have remained in the country.”² The first group includes every Bulgarian politician, but the most scorn is reserved for Ahmed Dogan, the leader of DPS, the Turkish minority party. The second group includes NATO, the EU, American imperialists (the CIA) and their servants (the IMF and the World Bank), George Soros, Turkey, Jews, Masons, Islamists, and even American evangelical proselytizers.

In 2004, Siderov got a daily show on a local, Burgas-based cable TV station called SKAT, which was famous for its amateurish journalism and populist positions. The fifteen-minute show was called *Ataka* (Attack). It taped in a bare-bones studio with no stage set, no reporters, no videos or any other filler; just Siderov, staring forcefully into the camera, yelling with self-righteous indignation and admonishing all “Bulgarophobes” that the Bulgarian people will not take the abuse much longer. The daily rant was Siderov’s take on the news, and he had three favorite lines of interpretation, which he hammered forcefully every night: (1) the inability and/or unwillingness of the Bulgarian state to curb raging Roma crime, which purportedly terrorized the majority of the Bulgarian population; (2) the rising threat of “Turkification” of the country, promoted by Ahmed Dogan’s DPS (allegedly financed by Turkey), and its partners in the governing coalition, aided by the West under the guise of “minority rights,” and abetted by Bulgarian human rights NGOs; and (3) the moral bankruptcy of the entire

political establishment, which stole from the Bulgarian people through crooked privatization, shady foreign debt deals, and ubiquitous corruption and nepotism. Siderov's rhetorical style was to pretend to speak on behalf of all angry Bulgarians to the perpetrators of all this injustice—the politicians, separatist ethnic Turks, and Roma crime barons.

By the spring of 2005, *Ataka* show had become SKAT's highest-rated show and Siderov was on the verge of becoming a household name. He gained enough confidence to try a run for parliament, but he needed to form a party to contest the elections. The Ataka Party was founded on 17 April 2005 by Siderov and a handful of supporters. However, Siderov quickly realized that he could not register Ataka officially as a party with the court in time to file an electoral registration application. The only solution was to form a coalition with some court-registered parties. Siderov chose parties that shared his nationalist views, but did not threaten his position as the leader of the coalition. The National Movement for the Salvation of the Fatherland (Natsionalno Dvizhenie za Spasenie na Otechestvoto) and the Bulgarian National-Patriotic Party (Bulgarska Natsional-Patriotichna Partiya) were two obscure nationalist outfits with valid court registration. The final two members of the Ataka coalition, the Union of Patriotic Forces "Defense" (Suyuz na Patriotichnite Sili "Zashtita") and the New Dawn Party (Partiya Nova Zora), also had nationalist populist platforms, but were invited mainly because they could contribute a rudimentary grassroots organization with local activists who could help turn out the vote for Ataka.

The Ataka coalition put forth a succinct, twenty-point platform (see Appendix).³ The platform avoided the in-your-face anti-minority and anti-Semitic rhetoric that Siderov used in his TV rants. The platform somewhat complicates the ideological categorization of Ataka on the left-right spectrum. It prominently features most classical far-right positions, such as restrictions on free speech to protect "sacred national symbols" (Point 3), tough-on-crime attitudes (Points 18–19), skepticism of multicultural values (Points 1–2), and support for smaller government (Point 10). The complications come from the inclusion of some traditionally leftist positions, such as the introduction of a minimum wage (Point 20) and support for state intervention in the economy to provide health care, social security, education, and other public goods (Points 4–5). However, those positions are part of Ataka's

paternalistic view of the state, rather than a social justice emphasis, and thus are quite consistent with a conservative outlook. Ataka's foreign policy position is clear enough—it goes well beyond Euroskepticism to advocate that Bulgaria reverse its Euro-Atlantic integration course and pursue full neutrality (or autarchy) instead. The left-right categorization of Ataka might be contentious, but the labeling of Ataka as a radical nationalist outfit is hardly controversial, given this platform.

No one, not even the Ataka faithful, expected what happened next. On 25 June 2005, Ataka received almost 300,000 votes (8.93 percent of the vote), which gave Siderov the fourth largest faction and the largest opposition faction in parliament. Given that the winner of the election, the Bulgarian Socialist Party, held only eighty-two seats in the 240-seat parliament, Ataka's twenty-one seats made a sizable parliamentary group. To achieve this result, Ataka overran both the United Democratic Forces (Obedineni demokraticzni sili, or ODS) and the Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria (Demokrati za silna Bulgaria, or DSB), the two heirs to Bulgaria's first anti-Communist formation, the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), which had governed the country in 1991–1992 and 1997–2001.⁴

Ataka's bursting onto the political scene was as big of an election surprise as they come. Ataka's initial success seems to have resulted from a fundamentally unpredictable confluence of voters' preferences, rather than a sustained and deliberate effort at building a new radical right.⁵ After this shockingly unpredictable initial success, many expected Ataka to be a flash-in-the-pan political phenomenon. However, the party has solidified its position in the Bulgarian party system, demonstrating both the staying power of its leader and a successful party-building strategy, which has spawned grassroots organizations across the country. In October 2006, Ataka's leader, Volen Siderov, made it into the run-off in the presidential election, receiving close to 650,000 votes (24 percent).⁶ In May 2007, Ataka again came in fourth in the elections for European parliament MPs, garnering this time 14 percent of the vote and outscoring even one of the partners in the governing coalition, NDSV.⁷ In the municipal elections held during the fall of 2007, Ataka fielded candidates in 93 percent of the municipalities across the country and won representation in 37 percent of the municipalities overall and in 90 percent of the municipal centers.⁸ In the July 2009 parliamentary election, Ataka improved its 2005 result; it

received nearly 400,000 votes, which amounted to 9.36 percent of the total vote.⁹

The transition from a cable TV commentator and conspiracy-theory-loving author to a seasoned politician did not soften Volen Siderov, who remained as flamboyant and offensive as radical nationalists come. In 2006, to mark the anniversary of the birth of Khristo Botev, a widely-read nineteenth-century poet and a fighter for Bulgarian independence from the Ottoman Empire, Siderov attributed to Botev the following offensive quotations (Siderov does not provide a citation, so the accuracy of the quote is uncertain): “Our brethren in Macedonia are in dire straights: they suffer from Turks, from Greeks, from Gypsies, and from Jews.” Botev also reportedly called Turks a “half-savage tribe.” Siderov then extolled Botev’s valor in “calling things by their real names” and dared the “traitors” from the Helsinki Human Rights Committee to denounce Botev and his memory. Another example of Siderov’s rhetoric reveals his conspiratorial-style populism. In his view, inflation in Bulgaria is caused by a conspiracy between Masons, Jews, and Turks who aim to cripple the Bulgarian economy and hurt ordinary Bulgarians. The detrimental influence of these three groups flows through all members of the governing coalition; the then prime minister, Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, was allegedly being propped up by the Masonic lodge, the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), and the Jewish-dominated Socialist International, and the DPS was being supported by Ankara.¹⁰ In 2007, Siderov published a collection of his parliamentary speeches and newspaper columns in a book with the incendiary title, *Moyata Bitka za Bulgaria* (My battle for Bulgaria), an obvious allusion to Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*.¹¹

Who Votes for Radical Nationalists? Evidence from Other European Countries

The literature on the European far right paints a detailed portrait of the typical radical nationalist voter. The goal of this chapter is to examine whether the voters who initially supported Ataka in 2005–2006 fit this profile. First, scholars describe a gender gap in the vote for the radical right. The consensus is pretty solid, as numerous studies have demonstrated that men are more likely than women to vote for far-right

parties.¹² The gender imbalance holds true even in the case of female leadership of the far-right party.¹³ Explaining this gender gap is more contentious, with scholars disagreeing about whether women are put off by the inherent antifeminism of the radical right message or whether subtle socioeconomic differences between the sexes account for the difference.¹⁴

Second, younger voters are more likely to support the far right than older voters. Analyses in Italy, France, Austria, and Switzerland show that extreme right political parties perform well among young and first-time voters.¹⁵ However, other studies caution that this correlation may be spurious and the reason why young people appear to vote disproportionately for the far right may have nothing to do with their age, but with a greater level of disaffection with the political system, which may be causing them to cast a protest vote.¹⁶

Third, some studies have shown that radical right voters tend to be poorer and less educated than the average voter.¹⁷ Scholars theorize that these marginalized citizens are more likely to be resentful about their position in society and are thus more likely to look for others to blame for their disadvantaged position. Thus, the far right's anti-minority positions are likely to appeal to these voters.

However, one has to be careful not to overemphasize these points because there are significant differences in the size of these effects across different countries. Some far-right parties do better among the middle class than others.¹⁸ For example, using Betz's numbers and comparing Austria, France, and Germany, Givens notes that "the radical right parties in France and Austria actually get a higher percentage of middle-level [technical and vocational school] voters, while the German parties have a higher percentage of low-level voters. This indicates that radical voters are not necessarily those with a low level of education."¹⁹

Finally, the literature features a prominent debate about the motivation behind casting a vote for the radical right. Do supporters vote *for* the radical right, or is their choice primarily a form of protest *against* the mainstream parties? Some scholars have argued that radical right voters are attracted to one or more of the main ideological positions proposed by the party. In the Western European context, negative attitudes toward increased immigration often account for voters' decision to support the radical right.²⁰ In post-Communist European states, the expansion of the

EU may have given rise to an increase in anti-EU attitudes which motivate voters to support the radical right.²¹ A complementary hypothesis posits that the radical right vote may be driven primarily by the party leader's charisma.²² Regardless of the specific policy motivation, the simple argument made is that far-right supporters vote for the far right because they like one or more of its ideological positions.

By contrast, the protest-vote hypothesis posits that protest voters are driven by resentment and opposition toward mainstream parties; they are not won over by the ideological positions of radical right parties.²³ Thus, protest voters normally would not vote at all, and only consider voting for special "antiparty parties" which appeal to a generalized antiparty sentiment.²⁴ The protest vote hypothesis has been supported indirectly by evidence of a dissonance between the ideological positions staked out by the party and those revealed by its sympathizers in surveys. If voters do not report the same views as the party that they voted for, then they must have voted for the party simply to register their disappointment with the political establishment. Protest voting has been used to explain why radical right voters in Romania appeared to disagree with the anti-democratic positions of Vadim Tudor and his party.²⁵ In addition, Bélanger and Aarts²⁶ have also found support for the protest vote hypothesis in analyzing data from some Western European elections where anti-democratic positions have not been a consistent theme. Pop-Eleches²⁷ has attempted to explain the past decade's surge of support for "unorthodox parties" in post-Communist Europe by claiming that protest voters at first punished incumbent parties by supporting a mainstream alternative, but the protest vote has more recently been directed toward voting for "unorthodox parties" because two mainstream post-Communist governments have already been in office. This point of view suggests that radical right parties may continue to have success in Eastern Europe without indicating voter radicalization.

Who Supported Ataka in 2005–2006?

Do the insights and hypotheses of the existing literature on the radical right help us to understand the emergence of the Ataka phenomenon? Did the early Ataka voters espouse the ideological positions advocated by Volen Siderov? Specifically, did Ataka voters reject democratic values and

display anti-capitalist, anti-European, and anti-minority views? Or, alternatively, did Ataka sympathizers support Ataka because they wanted to express their strong dissatisfaction with the entire political establishment?

This section builds a profile of Ataka's voters on the basis of a nationwide survey, called State of Society. Alfa Research, one of Bulgaria's premier polling agencies, collected the data in April 2006 through 1,017 face-to-face interviews. The ninety-two-question survey covers a broad array of political, economic, and cultural attitudes and actions. I use the survey data to assess what individual and socioeconomic characteristics as well as what ideological positions are correlated with a propensity to declare readiness to cast one's vote for Ataka. I also compare the profile of the self-identified Ataka voters to the profile of supporters of Bulgaria's other parliamentary-represented parties. Among the survey's 1,017 respondents, ninety-five (9.34 percent) stated that they would vote for Ataka if parliamentary elections were held on the Sunday after the survey was conducted. This proportion is consistent with Ataka's electoral support levels reported by other polls conducted in April 2006 and similar to the actual vote share that Ataka received in the June 2005 parliamentary election (8.93 percent). The next step in the analysis was to create indicators of ideological positions that are consistent with the positions expressed by Ataka, socioeconomic background, and other personal characteristics of the respondents that would allow me to build a profile of the Ataka supporter in 2006.

Volen Siderov has expressed profound disdain for Bulgaria's post-Communist political system, especially parliament and the party system, which, in his view, are utterly corrupt. The survey contains several questions that reveal respondents' positions on these central questions of democratic governance. Three questions ask directly whether respondents support an elected government with sufficient governing capacity. Respondents can express agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale with each of these three statements:

1. We should keep parliament, but weaken its powers and strengthen the powers of the presidency.
2. It would be best if we had no parliament, but a strong leader who decides things quickly.
3. The most important decisions about the country's development should be taken by experts, not by the cabinet or parliament.

On the basis of these questions, I created three indicators: *weakparl*, *strongleader*, and *technocracy*, where 1 signifies strong disagreement with the statement, 2—moderate disagreement with the statement, 3—inability to form an opinion about the statement, 4—moderate agreement, and 5—strong agreement with the statement.

The survey also contains a set of questions that reveal respondents' general attitude toward a multiparty parliamentary democratic system of government. Respondents are asked to agree or disagree with each of the following three statements on a five-point scale:

1. Multiparty systems usually cause chaos. We need a one-party system.
2. Dictatorship is the best form of government for us.
3. A multiparty system and a democratically elected parliament are the best form of government for Bulgaria.

On the basis of these questions, I created three more indicators: *oneparty*, *dictatorship*, and *multiparldem*. As with the previous agreement/disagreement variables, 1 signifies strong disagreement with the statement, 2 indicates moderate disagreement with the statement, 3 signifies inability to form an opinion about the statement, 4 shows moderate agreement, and 5 signifies strong agreement with the statement.

The second ideological position is opposition to EU accession. Ataka and Volen Siderov advocate the reversal of Bulgaria's European integration, as they see it as detrimental to Bulgaria's national interests. They have been especially critical of the EU's role in pushing minority rights legislation through the *Acquis communautaire*. Anti-EU sentiment is captured in the following question:

In various circumstances Bulgaria needs to choose and defend a very specific position. In your opinion, which of the following options for the country's development gives Bulgaria better opportunities?

1. We should enter the EU, even if this requires that we meet certain conditions.
2. I don't know.
3. We should stop listening to the EU, even if this puts us in isolation.

Given its wording, the question aims to capture a stronger form of opposition to European integration than simply Euroskepticism, which usually has a place in mainstream political discourse in both Eastern and Western Europe. I create an *antiEU* indicator, where respondents who choose the first answer are coded as 0, respondents who choose the second answer are coded as 1, and respondents who choose the third answer are coded as 2.

The third ideological position, which is central to Ataka's anti-capitalist rhetoric, namely, opposition to privatization, is reflected in the following question:

During the last fifteen years or so, a big share of state property was privatized and the process of doing it has been seriously criticized. In your opinion, what should be done now?

1. We should renationalize all privatized property.
2. All privatization transactions, which are suspected to have been illegally or corruptly concluded, should be reviewed by a court of law.
3. No significant changes to the status quo are necessary.

The wording of the question allows us to differentiate between a general sense of dissatisfaction with the way privatization was conducted and a radical position that the entire process should be reversed. I created a dummy variable (*nationalize*) where those who chose option 1 are coded as 1 and everyone else is coded as 0.

The final, and perhaps most important, ideological position centers on minority issues, which appear to be the most salient part of Ataka's platform. The question asks whether the respondent thinks the Movement of Rights and Freedoms, DPS, should be banned. I created a *banDPS* indicator which codes as 2 everyone who agrees with the statement: "DPS should be banned," as 0 everyone who agrees with the statement: "DPS should not be banned; it is a party like all the rest," and as 1 those who have no opinion on the subject. DPS is the party that represents the interests of the Turkish ethnic minority. Siderov and all other Ataka MPs repeatedly decry the supposed "Turkification" of Bulgaria. They also often claim that DPS and its leader, Ahmed Dogan, are national traitors and conduits of Turkey's policy to subjugate Bulgaria and breach its sovereignty. Thus, we should expect

that Ataka voters should strongly support a DPS ban. This indicator will help me determine whether Ataka supporters hold a more negative view toward the main Turkish-minority party than the average Bulgarian voter.

Finally, to check whether the protest vote hypothesis may hold water, I include an indicator that captures voters' negative assessment of *all* mainstream parties. The *antiestablish* indicator is built on responses to three separate questions. Each question asks respondents whether Bulgaria was developing in the right or wrong direction under a given cabinet. *Antiestablish* is coded as 1 when a respondent has expressed a belief that the situation in the country deteriorated under *each* of the three cabinets listed. Twenty-seven percent of respondents fall into that category. If voters supported Ataka to register their frustration with the political establishment, we should see a significant correlation between a critical view of all three post-Communist governments and readiness to vote for Ataka.

The second group of indicators contains the standard socioeconomic background variables suggested by the radical right literature. These include rural/urban place of residence, education, and income. These indicators will allow me to check whether the Bulgarian far right enjoys similar sources of support as its Western European counterparts. The Appendix provides the exact wording of the questions and descriptive statistics for all variables used in the analysis. The final group of indicators includes gender and age, which have been identified as important predictors of voting for the far right by the existing literature. I have also included an ethnicity dummy to check whether being an ethnic Bulgarian is correlated with an intention to vote for Ataka. Given Ataka's anti-minority positions, one would expect that the correlation would be strongly positive, as few or no members of ethnic minorities would be willing to support Ataka.

To build the profile of the typical Ataka voter, I estimate seven statistical models with party preference as a dependent variable and individual attitudes, socioeconomic background, and personal characteristics as the independent variables. The first goal is to see whether individuals who express support for the ideological positions that form the core of Ataka's platform would also state that they are ready to vote for Ataka if elections were held a few days after the administration of the survey. The second goal is to see whether Ataka voters are

fundamentally different from the electorate of the mainstream parties, the members of the governing coalition (BSP, NDSV, and DPS) and the mainstream right-of-center opposition (ODS and DSB) in 2006, or from those who say they do not plan to go to the polls. The results of the logit models are summarized in Table 10.1.

Table 10.1. Binomial Logit Models of Determinants of Voting Preference for Ataka, BSP, NDSV, DPS, DSB, ODS, and Nonvoters

Independent variables	Ataka	BSP	NDSV	DPS	DSB	ODS	Non-voters
ATTITUDES							
<i>Weakparl</i>	-.16* (.09)	.11 (.08)	-.26** (.13)	.25 (.19)	-.03 (.22)	-.24 (.15)	-.05 (.06)
<i>Strongleader</i>	.29*** (.09)	-.15* (.08)	-.06 (.14)	-.52** (.22)	-.12 (.20)	-.24 (.16)	.02 (.05)
<i>Technocracy</i>	-.03 (.10)	-.18* (.08)	.07 (.14)	.14 (.19)	.21 (.21)	-.02 (.15)	.03 (.06)
<i>Oneparty</i>	-.12 (.10)	.12 (.09)	-.20 (.17)	-.18 (.20)	.22 (.23)	-.40* (.21)	.08 (.06)
<i>Dictatorship</i>	.02 (.10)	.20** (.08)	-.06 (.17)	.004 (.21)	-1.34** (.55)	-.18 (.20)	-.05 (.06)
<i>Multiparldem</i>	.21* (.11)	-.08 (.09)	.05 (.17)	-.11 (.22)	.66** (.30)	-.16 (.18)	-.03 (.06)
<i>Antiestablish</i>	.69*** (.25)	-1.22*** (.26)	-.79 (.50)	.17 (.46)	-1.99* (1.06)	-.08 (.47)	.38** (.15)
<i>Nationalize</i>	.09 (.31)	.04 (.25)	.45 (.43)	.52 (.54)	.67 (.70)	.76 (.50)	-.33* (.19)
<i>AntiEU</i>	.12 (.12)	-.12 (.11)	-.27 (.21)	-.02 (.25)	-.15 (.31)	-.55** (.27)	.27*** (.07)
<i>BanDPS</i>	.79*** (.16)	-.05 (.11)	-.54** (.21)	-.81** (.38)	.79** (.31)	-.10 (.22)	-.01 (.07)

Independent variables	Ataka	BSP	NDSV	DPS	DSB	ODS	Non-voters
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS							
<i>Sex</i>	-.78*** (.16)	-.07 (.19)	.04 (.33)	-.07 (.39)	-.81 (.54)	-.23 (.38)	.22 (.13)
<i>Age</i>	-.004 (.01)	.04*** (.01)	-.003 (.01)	.03** (.01)	-.02 (.02)	.01 (.01)	-.01*** (.004)
<i>BG</i>	.79 (.51)	1.31*** (.37)	1.64** (.76)	-4.72*** (.64)	-.20 (1.16)	.32 (.67)	.04 (.21)
SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND							
<i>Type</i>	-.05 (.13)	.15 (.11)	-.37* (.19)	.76*** (.24)	-.31 (.30)	-.26 (.21)	-.07 (.07)
<i>Income</i>	.05 (.10)	-.10 (.08)	-.23 (.14)	.18 (.17)	-.23 (.21)	-.11 (.16)	.05 (.06)
<i>Edu</i>	-.08 (.14)	.12 (.11)	-.17 (.19)	-.08 (.31)	.37 (.29)	-.02 (.21)	-.03 (.08)
Constant	-3.46*** (1.16)	-4.86*** (1.03)	-.44 (1.73)	-3.55* (2.08)	-3.29 (2.72)	.70 (1.88)	-.26 (.66)
Pseudo R²	.15	.15	.11	.53	.24	.10	.03
N	973	973	973	973	973	973	973

Note: Numbers in parentheses are the standard errors.

*Significant at <.1 one-tailed test

** Significant at <.05 one-tailed test

*** Significant at <.01 one-tailed test

The statistical model for Ataka reveals four strong correlations. First, Ataka voters are disproportionately male. In this regard, Ataka's electorate resembles far-right electorates in other European democracies. Second, Ataka voters profess the strongest anti-establishment sentiment among all respondents. They are inclined to lob criticism at all three governments that were in power between 1997 and 2006 and claim that each government has contributed to Bulgaria's decline. That

Ataka voters stand out on this question is not an altogether surprising result because the other parties have all participated in either the current or a previous government. Hence their supporters are expected to express approval for at least one of the three governments in question. Predictably, sympathizers of the BSP, which led the government at the time the survey was conducted, and those of the DSB, whose leader, Ivan Kostov, was the prime minister in 1997–2001, strongly disagree with the negative assessment of these cabinets. What is more significant is that the anti-establishment position is more strongly correlated with support for Ataka than with a declared intention to abstain from participation in the next election. Non-voters are known to be alienated from the political mainstream, but this evidence suggests that Ataka voters are even angrier at the mainstream parties than self-identified non-voters. This finding suggests that the roots of Ataka's electoral success are to be found in the corrupt and messy first decade of Bulgaria's post-Communist transition. The electors who cast their vote for Ataka in 2005 were more dissatisfied with the country's previous post-Communist governments than anybody else. They chose Ataka as a vehicle for communicating their dissatisfaction.

The third strong correlation is between the belief that Bulgaria needs a strong leader and support for Ataka. This result could reflect Siderov's effectiveness as a charismatic leader who projects strength and a take-charge attitude. It could also be interpreted as a rejection of democratic values by Ataka voters. However, it is important to note that on the other five variables that seek to capture anti-democratic ideological positions, Ataka voters are either neutral or actually supportive of the democratic ideal. Ataka voters are more likely than the average respondent to believe that Bulgaria should stick with multiparty, parliamentary democracy as its form of government. Also, support for Ataka is not correlated with any strong opinion either about the technocratic government alternative to multiparty democracy, or about dictatorship as suitable for Bulgaria.

In fact, when we compare the results across parties, Ataka's supporters appear to be among the most supportive of a democratic regime. Only they and the electorate of the mainstream right-wing party, DSB, are strongly in favor of a multiparty parliamentary democracy. DSB and ODS supporters are the only ones unequivocally opposed to dictatorship and a one-party system. BSP voters, by contrast, are significantly

more likely than the average voter to think that dictatorship is the best form of government for Bulgaria. This result suggests that while the former Communist Party has worked hard at its image as a reformed, modern, social-democratic party, a large segment of its supporters still cling to its dictatorial tradition. DPS voters are only significantly opposed to having a strong leader in charge, perhaps because their leader stands a very low chance of assuming such power.

The final strong correlation in the Ataka model concerns the DPS party registration debate. Ataka sympathizers firmly support a ban on the Turkish minority party. However, so do supporters of the mainstream right-wing DSB. In fact, the two coefficients are exactly the same, so it seems the issue is as salient for both parties' electorates. Thus, while Ataka voters appear to be predictably opposed to the main political formation that represents the Turkish minority in Bulgaria's political life, this position is shared by the electorate of one of the mainstream parties as well. In fact, a whopping 43 percent of all respondents expressed support for a DPS ban, which indicates that this is not a marginal, radical position in Bulgarian political discourse.

The absence of correlation also carries important information that helps build a fuller picture of the typical Ataka voter. Unlike Ataka's leader, Volen Siderov, Ataka sympathizers do not seem to believe that all privatized property should be nationalized. Neither do they think that Bulgaria should risk international isolation by standing up firmly to the EU. The group that does believe that Bulgaria should stop acquiescing to EU demands so readily is the non-voters.

The most significant result from the personal characteristics and socioeconomic background variables is that all of them except the gender variable are insignificant. Unlike radical nationalist electorates in Europe, the Bulgarian radical right voters are neither disproportionately younger, nor poorer, nor less educated than the average voter. The fact that the Ataka electorate appears to be heterogeneous in socioeconomic and demographic terms is consistent with the hypotheses that support for Ataka is either protest-driven or charisma-driven. The result makes it less likely that Ataka votes were strongly influenced by socioeconomic interests and the ideological preferences associated with them.

The vote-choice models for the other parties produce correlations that are in line with common predictions from the literature. The significant results suggest that the absence of significant correlations in

the Ataka model are indeed evidence of a diverse electorate, rather than an artifact of this particular survey data set. For example, disaffection with politics and refusal to participate in elections is endemic among younger citizens in consolidated democracies around the world, and hence non-voters should be disproportionately younger. The non-voters model confirms this hypothesis. Across the post-Communist world, the ex-Communists can rely on stronger support by the older citizens who have been socialized under Communist rule, and indeed the BSP model shows a significant positive correlation between age and support for the BSP. DPS voters are indeed predominantly rural residents, as one would expect, since the Turkish minority is concentrated in rural, agricultural regions in southern and northeastern Bulgaria. NDSV voters are predominantly urban dwellers, which is also consistent with the yuppie image that the party built in the mid-2000s.

Finally, surprisingly enough for a party whose leader has openly criticized and attacked both the Turkish and the Roma communities, Ataka does *not* appear to draw its supporters only from among ethnically Bulgarian voters. BSP and NDSV voters, by contrast, tend to be predominantly ethnically Bulgarian while DPS draws its support mainly from the ranks of ethnic minorities.

Conclusion

This paper attempts to create a detailed profile of the Ataka voters soon after the party burst on the political scene in 2005. The quantitative analysis presented here suggests four main conclusions. Most importantly, Ataka supporters are not driven mainly or exclusively by anti-minority sentiments. Ataka supporters would like to curtail the participation of the Turkish minority in politics. However, nearly half the Bulgarian electorate espouses this view, and Ataka voters are as strongly committed to it as the mainstream right of center voters. Thus, the Ataka phenomenon should not be interpreted exclusively or even foremost as a resurgence of ethnic Bulgarian nationalism and anti-minority sentiment. Second, Ataka supporters do not appear to snub multiparty parliamentary democracy, reject EU integration, or advocate the reversal of privatization. In other words, they do not seem to parrot Volen Siderov's ideological positions. Third, Ataka supporters were a

motley crew; they tend to be men, but they appear to come from different socioeconomic strata, age groups, and corners of the country. Finally, Ataka voters are strongly dissatisfied with the mainstream parties' performance in government. Thus, the evidence suggests that the initial Ataka vote reflects the protest and disaffection of the mainstream Bulgarian voter, rather than his radicalization.²⁸

Appendix

Ataka's Twenty-Point Platform

1. Bulgaria is a uninational, monolithic state, which cannot be divided along any of the following lines: religious, ethnic, or cultural. Religious or ethnic origin differences cannot be put above national belonging. Whoever does that is voluntarily distancing him/herself from the Bulgarian nation and state and therefore cannot have put any demands on them.
2. Bulgarian is the official language in Bulgaria and the national media, which draw money from the state budget, cannot broadcast in any other language. There should be a prohibition and clear sanctions for ethnically based parties and separatist organizations.
3. There should be strict sanctions for insults to Bulgaria and anything that is sacred to the Bulgarian nation.
4. The top priority of the state should be the health, social security, education, spiritual and material prosperity of the Bulgarian nation. This is a higher priority than the desire to join any political or military supranational unions.
5. The Bulgarian state should use all its resources and levers to secure the health and social security of all Bulgarians, and also to provide the necessary conditions for spiritual and material prosperity.
6. Every Bulgarian investor, entrepreneur, and producer should have priority over every foreign investor, entrepreneur or producer until our living standard reaches the average for Europe. Bulgaria's industry, trade, and banks should be owned by Bulgarians.
7. Tax and income levels in Bulgaria have to conform to the capacity and needs of the Bulgarian population, rather than to the requirements of the IMF and the World Bank.
8. Privatization deals can be revised.

9. The state should promote Bulgarian business, public or private, both inside the country and abroad.
10. The budget-formation scheme should be revisited and the distribution of assets revised to benefit Bulgarian citizens, rather than the governing elite. The administration should be smaller.
11. A strategy for overcoming the demographic catastrophe among Bulgarians.
12. Immediate withdrawal of our troops from Iraq.
13. Bulgaria should leave NATO. It should not join any military blocs. Full neutrality. No foreign military bases on Bulgarian territory.
14. Referenda on all important questions, relevant to the life of over 10 percent of the nation.
15. Bulgarian agrarian land should not be sold to foreigners under any circumstances.
16. All chapters of the negotiations with the EU that have so far been completed should be reopened and all clauses that are detrimental to Bulgaria's interests should be renegotiated. The agreement about the closure of the Kozlodui nuclear power plant should be scrapped.
17. We should put an end to Bulgaria's dependence on the IMF and the World Bank.
18. We should have a "clean hands" operation. All who have enriched themselves through crime should be criminally investigated. All deals where a politician is a party should be investigated. All foreign debt deals should also be investigated.
19. All assets that are illegally obtained should be confiscated and put into a fund for free health care. The concept of "national treason" should be enshrined in legislation. All national traitors should be prosecuted.
20. Introduction of a minimal hourly wage, which corresponds to the average European minimum hourly wage.

Let's return Bulgaria to the Bulgarians!

Exact Wording of Survey Questions & Percentage
Breakdown for Variables Used in Analysis

Dependent Variables

If parliamentary elections were held this Sunday, which party would you vote for?	
BSP	168 (16.52%)
NDSV	43 (4.23%)
ODS	32 (3.15%)
DPS	51 (5.01%)
Ataka	95 (9.34%)
DSB	20 (1.97%)
BNS	14 (1.38%)
Any party headed by Boyko Borisov	87 (8.55%)
Other	24 (2.36%)
Refuse to answer	51 (5.01%)
I wouldn't vote	432 (42.48%)

Independent variables: Attitudes

There are different opinions on the form of government that would be best for Bulgaria. Please, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements. (One answer on each row.)	Agree completely	Agree somewhat	I don't know / I can't decide	Disagree somewhat	Disagree completely
We should keep parliament, but weaken its powers and strengthen the powers of the presidency. (<i>weakparl</i>)	231 (23%)	327 (32%)	270 (26%)	108 (11%)	81 (8%)
It would be best if we had no parliament, but a strong leader who decides things quickly. (<i>strongleader</i>)	172 (17%)	174 (17%)	262 (26%)	156 (15%)	253 (25%)
The most important decisions about the country's development should be taken by experts, not by the cabinet or parliament. (<i>technocracy</i>)	221 (22%)	248 (24%)	293 (29%)	123 (12%)	132 (13%)
Multiparty systems usually cause chaos. We need a one-party system. (<i>oneparty</i>)	99 (10%)	150 (15%)	291 (28%)	161 (16%)	316 (31%)
Dictatorship is the best form of government for us. (<i>dictatorship</i>)	66 (7%)	86 (8%)	297 (29%)	123 (12%)	445 (44%)
A multiparty system and a democratically elected parliament are the best form of government for Bulgaria. (<i>multiparldem</i>)	185 (18%)	305 (30%)	301 (30%)	110 (11%)	116 (11%)

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT DIRECTION WAS BULGARIA HEADING IN DURING THE FOLLOWING PERIODS?
(PROVIDE AN ANSWER ON EACH ROW BELOW)

Antiestablish codes as 1 those who chose 3 on each row; everyone else as 0.
277 (27%)=1; 740 (73%)=0

	Right direction	I don't know	Wrong direction
Ivan Kostov's cabinet	148 (15%)	591 (58%)	278 (27%)
Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha's cabinet	182 (18%)	555 (55%)	280 (27%)
The current cabinet of Sergei Stanishev	147 (15%)	429 (42%)	441 (43%)

DURING THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS OR SO, A BIG SHARE OF STATE PROPERTY WAS PRIVATIZED AND THE PROCESS OF DOING IT HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY CRITICIZED. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT SHOULD BE DONE NOW? (GIVE ONE ANSWER)

nationalize

We should renationalize all privatized property.	170 (17%)
All privatization transactions, which are suspected to have been illegally or corruptly concluded, should be reviewed by a court of law. / No significant changes to the status quo are necessary.	847 (83%)

IN VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES BULGARIA NEEDS TO CHOOSE AND DEFEND A VERY SPECIFIC POSITION. IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS FOR THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT GIVES BULGARIA BETTER OPPORTUNITIES?

antiEU

We should enter the EU, even if this requires that we meet certain conditions.	598 (59%)
I don't know.	55 (5%)
We should stop listening to the EU, even if this puts us in isolation.	364 (36%)

PLEASE, INDICATE WHICH STATEMENT IS CLOSER TO YOUR OPINION. <i>banDPS</i>	
DPS should be banned.	436 (43%)
I don't know.	102 (10%)
DPS should NOT be banned; it is a party like all the rest.	479 (47%)

*Independent Variables: Socioeconomic Background
and Personal Characteristics*

SEX <i>sex</i>	
Male	494 (49%)
Female	518 (51%)

EDUCATION <i>edu</i>	
BA, MA, PhD	33 (3%)
Associate degree	313 (31%)
High School diploma	477 (47%)
Finished 8 th grade	30 (3%)
Did not finish 8 th grade	162 (16%)

RESIDES IN <i>type</i>	
The capital	165 (16%)
Administrative region center	325 (32%)
Other town	198 (20%)
Village	329 (32%)

APPROXIMATE MONTHLY INCOME PER FAMILY MEMBER <i>income</i>	
Under 50 leva	101 (10%)
50–100 leva	258 (26%)
100–150 leva	230 (23%)
150–200 leva	155 (16%)
200–300 leva	133 (13%)
Over 300 leva	119 (12%)

ETHNIC IDENTITY <i>bg</i>	
Bulgarian	863 (85%)
Other	154 (15%)

Translation by Maria Popova

NOTES

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 - 28 An important, but separate issue is whether the sustained presence of Ataka's virulent racist, nationalist rhetoric in Bulgarian public discourse has aided the gradual strengthening and mainstreaming of sincere, rather

than opportunistic or instrumental radical nationalism. It is possible that over the past ten years since Ataka's political breakthrough in 2005 its voters have internalized its leader's nationalist agenda. As Ataka became a tacit parliamentary ally of two governments between 2009 and 2014, it is less likely that voters who want to protest against the political mainstream would choose Ataka as the vehicle of this protest. It is also possible that the proliferation of nationalist parties and the expansion of the nationalist vote in the 2013 and 2014 parliamentary elections (see Petia Kostadinova and Maria Popova, "The 2013 Parliamentary Elections in Bulgaria." *Electoral Studies* 34 [2014], 365–368, and Petia Kostadinova and Maria Popova, "The 2014 Parliamentary Elections in Bulgaria." *Electoral Studies* 38.3 [2015], 114–118) can be traced back to Ataka. Both of these hypotheses can be the subject of future research.

CHAPTER 11

Local Governance in Bosnia: Addressing Ethno-Nationally and Locally Defined Interests?

Paula M. Pickering¹

The Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the 1992–1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter, Bosnia), created a highly decentralized new state, which consisted of two entities, Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the latter further subdivided into ten cantons. Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats are considered constituent nations of the country, and there are complicated power-sharing arrangements to guarantee the political representation of each nation at the highest levels of government: the state, entity, and cantonal. This arrangement has been criticized for creating a political system that privileges ethno-national representation² and discourages cross-ethno-national compromise at each of the most important levels of government: state, entity, and cantonal.³ These institutions and consequences of the war have strongly encouraged the continuation of the prominent role of ethno-national parties in politics. Partly for this reason, external state-builders in the 2000s began to devote significant resources to strengthening Bosnia's municipal governance, which they have viewed as the level of governance best suited to be most responsive and most effective in delivering desired, basic services to citizens. This chapter investigates whether internationally supported reforms in Bosnia have helped municipal governments, which lack the elaborate guarantees of group rights enshrined in Bosnia's higher levels of government, to manage the different ethno-national and complex local identities that can function as alternatives to the ethno-national

identities that Theodora Dragostinova and Yana Hashamova discuss in the introduction of this volume. The study finds that while reforms of municipal governance in Bosnia have raised the attention that local officials give to locally generated concerns, the bulk of local officials' efforts remain focused on ethno-national and partisan interests.

This attention to local governance is important because, frequently, it is theorized to be a key foundation for democracy. Donor governments, including the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), international financial institutions, and intergovernmental organizations, have embraced programs to improve the quality of governance at the local level as essential to democratization.⁴ Political scientists have argued that effective democratic states need strongly participatory local democracy: as citizens have opportunities to participate, they become more effective at rewarding and punishing the behavior of political officials. As a consequence, rational political officials at the local or even regional level seeking reelection possess incentives to be responsive to local needs and concerns, regardless of ethno-national or other identity.⁵ In addition, the municipal level is also the level of government theorized to be most effective in delivering services.

In the context of culturally divided states, like Bosnia, municipal governance is viewed as a conflict-resolution mechanism through which ethnic conflicts can be addressed out of the harsh politicized light of the national government.⁶ Democratic local governance is theorized as providing increased opportunities for policies that will benefit marginalized peoples, including those who do not belong to the dominant ethno-national group⁷ in the municipality.⁸ In practice, however, local governments often merely reflect the social, ethno-national, political, and economic conflicts that divide local communities, rather than empower ordinary citizens.⁹

This chapter explores whether internationally supported local governance reforms in post-Dayton Bosnia have empowered ordinary citizens who lack ties to the dominant ethno-national group or to a dominant ethno-nationalist political party. After discussing the Bosnian political-historical context that shapes the practice of local governance today, international support for reforms is outlined. Data gathered through field research is then analyzed. Findings suggest that local governance reforms have modestly raised the importance of local interests

though not enough in order to eclipse narrow ethno-national or political interests. The chapter ends by considering the implications of these developments for sites allowing alternatives to the nation in Bosnia.

The Domestic Context for Local Governance

A better understanding of local governance in Bosnia requires attention to prior experience with local governance, local resources and political dynamics, and international aid.¹⁰ Socialist Yugoslavia, of which Bosnia was a republic, implemented decentralization, albeit within a one-party system, partly because it viewed the autonomy of the republics and local institutions as a key mechanism for accommodating the diverse Yugoslav populations.¹¹ Under Tito, municipalities (*općine*) were considered centers of innovative social self-government reforms, which attracted the attention of Western scholars and practitioners despite the modest power actually devolved.¹² Continuing traditions created in the socialist period, municipalities in post-conflict Bosnia possess a civil service, a mayor, and a legislature. They have responsibility for public works projects, basic health care, preschool administration, and local development. They also provide basic documents and social welfare programs.¹³

Though the mono-ethno-national parties that captured the most votes in Bosnia's first multiparty elections in 1990¹⁴ agreed to work together, in practice they began to divvy up power by dominating those localities where they predominated. Violence during the wars of the 1990s, pursued often by extremist leaders who sought to secede from the state, further debilitated local governance capacity. In multiple areas during the Bosnian War of 1992–1995, extremist political parties staged coups and forcibly took over elected municipal governments in order to install a local political system in which their ethno-nationalist party controlled politics, economics, and society.¹⁵ Ethnic cleansing during the war and efforts after 1995 to block the return of those displaced altered the local demographics of Bosnia, increasing the percentage of municipalities dominated by one of the country's primary ethno-national groups, the Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats.¹⁶ Kolind soundly argues that the war elevated ethno-national identity to the most important mode of identification in Bosnia.¹⁷ At the same

time, my research supports Kolind's municipality-based field research that found "that what characterizes everyday life in Stolac is ... a constant tension between a nationalistic discourse informed by war and ... local modes of identification related to concrete situations."¹⁸ How do post-war local governments accommodate such competing demands?

The internationally drafted constitution contained in the Dayton Agreement of 1995 is the centerpiece of state-building in Bosnia. It is the entity level that is vested with the bulk of the political power in the state. Ironically, the Dayton structure decentralizes the state but leaves the very level of government theorized to be the most practical—the municipal—weak and resource-strapped. As examples of Dayton's power-sharing rules, each of Bosnia's three constituent nations is guaranteed representation at the national level (both the three-person collective presidency and in the state's upper house), the entity level (in the Republika Srpska's and the Federation's legislatures), and in the Federation's ten cantonal assemblies.¹⁹ Not surprisingly, these quotas have strengthened the already strong power of mono-ethno-national parties. Some of the most prominent mono-ethno-national parties have been the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) and the Party of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) (for the Bosnian Serbs), the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) and the Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH) (for the Bosniaks), and the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and the Croatian Democratic Union-1990 (HDZ-1990) (for the Bosnian Croats). A Bosniak-dominated party that contains politicians of different ethno-national backgrounds, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), has also managed to exert political influence. The existence of a mutual veto in all decision-making bodies on the state and entity level guarantees that the vital interests of one group can never be outvoted. In practice, the extensive veto mechanisms contained in the Dayton constitution have discouraged political compromise and good governance at the national level.²⁰

Overseeing governance in Bosnia is an international official who has exercised executive authority but who is unaccountable to Bosnian citizens. Many scholars have pointed out the hypocrisy of locally unaccountable external state-builders using the undemocratic means of imposing decisions and laws for the supposed long-term goal of building democracy.²¹ Such an approach, they argue, undermines local

ownership over state-building and deepens pessimism about the viability of Bosnia. Indeed, the country's highest levels of governance are plagued by dysfunction and fragility.

Even under these adverse circumstances, could local-level governance be capable of functioning and accommodating ethno-nationally and non-nationally, locally generated interests of its citizens? Are today's internationally supported municipal governance reforms more capable of functioning as a vehicle of political reform and social change than Edin Hajdarpasic found, in Chapter 3 in this volume, for Ottoman and Habsburg vehicles for reform and change that attempted to counter-balance ethno-national forces? At the municipal level the only power-sharing arrangement is that the chairperson of the municipal assembly must be of a different ethno-national background than the mayor in all municipalities where the dominant ethno-national group comprises 80 percent or less of the municipal population.²²

The absence of international attention to local politics in Dayton and in the immediate post-war period allowed municipal leaders and administrators belonging to parties claiming to represent the dominant ethno-national group in the municipality to entrench their power. Those parties claiming to represent the views of "minorities" (those people belonging to constituent nations not currently dominating the municipality) also participated in municipal assembly elections, including, for example, Serb parties in the Federation in the 2000s.²³ Even under these conditions, however, internationally supported "non-nationalist"²⁴ albeit ethno-nationally dominated political parties, such as SDP and locally and regionally based parties, captured a higher percentage of seats in local assemblies than in those parties at the cantonal, entity, or national levels.²⁵ This finding suggests that local concerns, in addition to ethno-national ones, matter for municipal-level governance. Also important for local governance in the immediate post-war period were struggles among "hardliners" and "technocrats" inside ethno-nationalist political parties. Such struggles undermine claims of the monolithic nature of ethno-nationalist parties and their supporters, somewhat similar to Maria Popova's findings in this volume on Bulgaria's far-right party's supporters. Victories by technocrats interested in attracting investment into their municipalities offered by international donors supporting "minority" return and reconstruction, led to greater levels of cooperation with return efforts and democratic reform.²⁶

It was not until the 2000s, that international officials began to focus on rebuilding local governance as a level of governance that might help better connect citizens with their political representatives and allow for more responsiveness than higher levels of governance. Virtually all key donors active in the Bosnia have developed local governance programs.²⁷ USAID, in partnership with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Dutch embassy to Bosnia, developed the Governance Accountability Project (GAP) to improve municipal-level governments' citizen-oriented services; management and information systems; policy and accountability procedures; transparency and citizen participation in decision-making; and revenue generation and financial management.²⁸ The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation supported similar reforms in the Doboï region.²⁹ GAP urged adoption of a series of laws that strengthened local governance, including a law for the direct election of mayors in the Federation (2004), a principles-of-local-self-governance law in the Federation in 2006, and the value-added tax, a proportion of which goes directly to local governments. The World Bank and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) have promoted better public service delivery and local economic development, with UNDP also focusing on developing a socially inclusive process of local economic development planning.³⁰ OSCE (2007) programs have aimed to reform municipal administrations and increase public participation. Finally, European institutions have provided aid that seeks to make local governments comply with European norms and EU accession requirements.³¹ But what has been the impact of these programs on the quality of local governance and creation of conditions for the normal lives for which so many citizens, regardless of ethno-national or political affiliation, yearn?

Method

To investigate the impact of aid to improve local governance, my colleagues and I used a comparative case study of Bosnian municipalities, which allows us to gather, up close and over time, high quality information on the ground. In addition, I analyzed data from nationally representative sample surveys that I designed and were conducted in

2008 by the survey organization Prism in Bosnia. Findings, surveys, reports from bilateral donors, international development organizations, and civil society groups also provide information about the outcomes of local governance reforms.

Our central cases in the Federation were selected to control for important, plausible domestic socioeconomic, demographic, and political factors theorized to influence the quality of local governance, while allowing variation of factors tied to international involvement. Brdo municipality and Planina municipality³² in Central Bosnia have similar, medium-sized populations and economic resources. They share similar ethno-national distributions (predominately Bosniaks, with a modest group of Croats, 25 and 10 percent, respectively, and a small community of Serbs and “others”³³) as well as the experience of wartime violence between extremists in the Croat and Bosniak communities. In terms of domestic politics, both municipalities have mayors who belong to the same ethno-national Bosniak political party that dominates the canton to which they belong, and confront political competition in their municipal councils. Despite these similarities, Planina has participated in fewer international programs for local governance and received less international funding, which might adversely impact reforms seeking to increase local governance effectiveness and responsiveness to local citizens’ interests.

Semistructured interviews with decision-makers in local governance³⁴ and person-on-the-street interviews³⁵ in the two case study municipalities that my colleagues and I conducted help reveal how international officials, domestic actors, and resources influence the outcomes of local governance reforms. We asked respondents about their experiences with and views about local governance and internationally supported reform.³⁶ We also observed local governance meetings in the two case study municipalities, and compared them to several other diverse municipalities, one considered a successful reformer (Voda) and one considered “troubled” (Kamen). To assist in interpreting interview testimony and observation of local governance meetings, we used the qualitative data-analysis program, NVivo.³⁷ NVivo allowed us to call up systematically and within context all discourse about local governance throughout interview testimony, observation, and survey responses on the topic of interest.

Findings

Analysis of these different kinds of evidence suggests that internationally supported local governance reforms have created opportunities to raise the importance of the local. But testimony and observation strongly suggest that international assistance is constrained by local politics and reforms have not elevated local interests above those of ethno-national and political interests.

Local Elections and Governments

Reforms' elevation of local concerns is supported by the World Bank's study of local governance reforms, which concluded that most stakeholders believed that the direct election of mayors improved the mayor's accountability and transparency, increased the focus on citizen needs, and decreased the power of political lobbies and elites.³⁸ Local election results after the introduction of the direct election of the mayor (in 2004 and 2008) continue to allow comparatively better opportunities for non-nationalist parties than at higher levels of governance.³⁹ Also, analysis of elections data in 2008 suggests that in over 89 percent of Bosnian municipalities at least one ethno-national party representing a non-dominant ethno-national group in the municipality competed in municipal assembly elections. In addition, the 2008 elections for mayor were contested by at least one ethno-national party representing a non-dominant ethno-national group in the municipality in about 31 percent of Bosnian municipalities. Even in those municipalities where an ethno-national party representing a non-dominant group did not contest the mayoral election, at least as many citizens voted for the mayor as for a municipal assembly representative.

As an indication of their functioning, municipalities regularly pass annual budgets that generally meet legal requirements for public access and deadlines, outcomes often lacking at the cantonal, Federation, and national levels of government.⁴⁰ Local councils also regularly have quorums. Stakeholders' and citizens' views as well as observation of local governance meetings illustrate how well local governments function for their citizens.

Stakeholders' Views

Mayors in our case study municipalities recognized the need to govern for a diverse population. Both mayors professed their commitment to governing for citizens regardless of background. Planina's mayor identified distrust between ethno-national groups as one of the biggest obstacles to good local governance.⁴¹ Thus, he considered his strategy of creating a "political atmosphere for change" through fostering conditions for consensus as critical to his ability to govern effectively. Forging consensus involved holding inclusive meetings in order to create an environment where each group can view a project as useful. Brdo's mayor considered the key to a constructive relationship with the municipal assembly was "to get all parties to see that his proposals are useful to all citizens," regardless of background, ethno-national or otherwise. These are clear appeals to the idea that local politics could and should be practical, rather than ideological or ethnically driven. However, this is easier said than done.

An interview with the Croat chairman of Planina's Municipal Council suggested that such efforts at inclusivity and non-discrimination were in practice less successful than in theory, at least in the view of the "minority's" leadership.⁴² He highlighted several areas that he claimed were still plagued with ethno-national favoritism, alleging that staff of the "mini citizen service centers" set up in Planina "look first at the names" of citizens in order to discriminate based on ethno-national belonging. He also alleged that infrastructure proposals from Croat neighborhoods were systemically rejected by the local government. Though his claims of discrimination in these local services are plausible for Planina, they are not supported by nationwide studies. For example, a nationally representative sample survey funded by the UN Development Program in 2009 found that only a small percentage of persons—2.7 percent—believed that discrimination with public service provision at the local level was a significant problem.⁴³ Instead, respondents singled out "low quality" as the chief problem. Even lower percentages identified discrimination as the most important problem with roads and bridges (0.4 percent), water supply and sewage (1.2 percent) and garbage collection and street cleaning (1 percent).

The Croat chairman of Planina's municipal council, however, produced concrete paperwork demonstrating the low levels of employees

of Croat background working for public enterprises in the municipality. This specific claim is supported by the UNDP nationwide survey that found widespread allegations of political and ethno-national favoritism in public enterprise hiring practices, a process significantly influenced by cantons in the Federation. Yet, the chairman of Planina's council placed the bulk of the blame for this situation on the mayor. His assessment of blame was shared by all eleven members of the Croat community we interviewed on the street in Planina (see below).

The conduct at Brdo's municipal assembly meetings also indicates that ethno-national politics undermines the quality of local governance in that locality. In a special municipal assembly meeting on the economy, representatives of the coalition of Croat political parties walked out after the (Bosniak) (SBIH) representative referenced 1993, when Croat extremists initiated violence against Bosniaks. The Croat councilmen asserted this date amounted to spitting in the face of Croat people.⁴⁴ The mention of merely a date achieved the goal of upsetting "minorities" without ever explicitly fingering an ethno-national group or party.

Not all presidents of municipal councils levied such claims of mayoral discrimination against citizens not belonging to the municipality's dominant ethno-national group, however. A different perspective on the mayor's work with "minority" leadership in the municipality was offered by the president of the Municipal Assembly in Voda, whose population was 11 percent "minority." Like her counterpart in Planina, she belonged to the largest "minority" group in the municipality. Unlike her counterpart in Planina, however, she was not a member of a mono-ethno-nationalist party representing a minority group. Instead, though she did not refer to her political affiliation during the interview, she belonged to the rhetorically non-nationalist but predominantly Bosniak Social Democratic Party (SDP). Her party affiliation probably influenced her views about the greater possibilities for party officials, ethno-national groups, and citizens to find common ground at the local level. Implying support for the less ethnocentric and politicized logic of local governance, this representative claimed that the mayor and parties in the municipal assembly largely shared priorities for the municipality.⁴⁵ She credited the mayor with being a good manager, which she believed included being inclusive and open for discussion and listening to multiple perspectives. She described the municipal assembly's opposition political parties as critical, but not destructive, arguing that the

approach of politicians at the municipal level is different from politicians at other levels of governance who have “gross, sick ambitions.”

This characterization of local-level officials as more practical and less self-interested was echoed, not surprisingly, by municipal administrative officials in Brdo and Planina. They repeatedly pointed to the small nature of the municipality as inhibiting corruption. It is not difficult for citizens to understand the functioning or lack of functioning of their municipality. This is because they are generally well connected to citizens in their neighborhoods and throughout the municipality. They also often directly encounter tangible evidence of municipal governance performance in their everyday lives. This varies from viewing the quality of their child’s primary school building and administration, to walking along their neighborhood’s streets of varying cleanliness, to interacting with municipal clerks in order to obtain official documents. This view was reinforced by mayors and ordinary people interviewed in the World Bank study, who asserted that local-level work is the most visible and has the most tangible results for citizens. This logic underlay mayors’ desires for well-run municipalities.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, interviews with local officials emphasize that the logic was not in and of itself strong enough to ensure equitable delivery of municipal services.

The Word on the Street

Most persons we approached on the street in Planina (eighteen of twenty-seven) and Brdo (twenty of twenty-six) in 2010 felt that the quality of municipal services related to delivery of documents had improved in the past two years, praised the more modern and better organized facilities, and expressed satisfaction with the delivery of documents (88.9 percent in Planina and 80 percent in Brdo). Of those citizens who had approached an unfamiliar municipal staffer for assistance with an issue, all in Planina said their request was satisfied without any problems. In contrast, six in Brdo said they were merely passed from one administrative worker to another without ever obtaining the desired help. This is an indication of Brdo’s more measured improvements in providing services.

Interviews that we conducted and other survey data on local governance reforms suggest that citizens are more pessimistic about the

results of the larger endeavor of local democratic governance reforms beyond document delivery. In a nationally representative sample survey of 1,538 citizens conducted by the Bosnian survey organization, Prism, only 14 percent of Bosnian respondents in 2008 believed that local governance reforms had produced benefits for all citizens, while 30.4 percent felt local governance reforms produced no impact (see Table 11.1). The remainder of respondents felt that local governance reforms had either produced disproportionate results for an ethnic or political group or worse results for all. Respondents in the same survey expressed frustration with local government performance and opportunities for participation in local government. This sentiment was echoed by many whom we talked with in the person-on-the-street interviews in Planina and Brdo. The informal interviews with citizens revealed widespread criticism (74 percent in Planina and 92 percent in Brdo) of the openness of the local decision-making processes. A significant percentage of citizens in Planina (63 percent) and in Brdo (58 percent) were also dissatisfied with the delivery of services related to property and construction, alleging corruption.

Especially troubling is that all eleven Croats we interviewed in Planina expressed dissatisfaction with the mayor, alleging that he regularly marginalized their community. Of particular interest is the way in which they described why he marginalized their community, by mentioning merely his party affiliation—the Party of Democratic Action (SDA). This wording clearly challenges some of the theoretical literature on the pragmatic logic of local politics and instead suggests that the mayor is simply viewed as a henchman for his party. Our Croat respondents in Planina consistently felt that their mayor did not adequately address issues that were important to them. This included problems like trash pickup, which adversely affected tourism in their village. Attempts to bring attention to this issue at a municipal level have apparently failed, as it was not considered a priority. Municipality trash pickup and disposal services also evoked dissatisfaction among persons we interviewed on the street in Brdo, though dissatisfaction was not concentrated among Croats. Eighty percent of interviewees on the street in Brdo lamented the lack of an official municipal trash depot, necessitating the use of an unauthorized and unsightly depot.

In our nationally representative survey, minorities were significantly more likely than respondents belonging to the dominant ethno-

Table 11.1. Citizens Views of Local Governance Reforms in Bosnia

	State-wide	By Ethno-national Background			By Majority–Minority	
		Bosniak	Serb	Croat	Majority	Minority
Improve benefits for all citizens	14.0%	11.7%	21.2%	9.8%	15.3%	9.8%
Disproportionate benefits for (majority, local minority, or activists of the governing party)	28.6%	27.3%	25.2%	37.6%	24.3%	42.3%
No change	30.4%	34.9%	33.1%	19.2%	33.9%	19.5%
Only more bureaucracy—fewer benefits	13.7%	16.3%	10.2%	13.7%	14.9%	10.0%
Other	0.7%	0.6%	1.1%	1.1%	.6%	1.1%
Don't know/wouldn't like to answer	12.6%	10.4%	9.3%	19.2%	11.0%	17.3%

Data Sources: PRISM, Paula Pickering and Mark Baskin, “Into the Weeds Database,” Sarajevo, 2008.
N=1538

national group to believe that greater transparency of municipal decision-making could improve the responsiveness of local governance. Minorities were also significantly more likely to feel disempowered, believing that nothing could be done to improve local governance responsiveness. These views strongly suggest that local governments have a long way to go before treating citizens equally and equally well.

Local Governments in Action

Observation of local government meetings provides a different window into the outcome of local government reforms. Observation of Voda's local assembly meeting held to consider adoption of the draft municipal budget suggested that local television coverage of assembly meetings and of stories related to local governance contributed to more effective local governance.

A closer look at Voda's local assembly meeting held in October 2009 to consider adoption of the draft local budget offers insights into local government decision-making. Many of those attending the meeting were personally welcomed by the municipal assembly president; they appeared to be well-connected to municipal authorities, including some neighborhood or local community (*mjesna zajednica*, or MZ) leaders, several heads of public enterprises, leaders of veterans associations, and union officials. The meeting was not free from ethno-national tension. In one exchange, an SDA local assemblyman accused an SDP colleague of not understanding what he went through during the war, referring supposedly to the SDP representative's lack of service in the Bosnian military.

But this outburst was countered by calls for moderation, particularly for representatives to stop personal attacks. Indeed, several municipal opposition members' behavior affirmed the municipal assembly leader's assertion in our meeting several days beforehand that opposition council representatives are critical but not destructive. An oppositionist described his request for additional information on the decision-making process producing the draft budget and on implementation of the prior year's budget as a move "not intended to be obstructionist." A representative of the smallest opposition party asserted the desire of his party to "be a constructive opposition" by proposing amend-

ments to, rather than by rejecting, the draft budget. After listening to representatives complain that their proposals for investment were not accepted by the capital investment commission and lobby for their acceptance, the opposition party member called for realism about the economic recession and appealed to the representatives' duty to ensure the budget works "in the service of all citizens." Confronted with being outnumbered by the SDA and its supporters, the opposition members appeared to use the public meeting to publicize their calls that the mayor and his administration be more accountable. They sought accountability for the incomplete implementation of the prior budget, for garnering support from the canton, and for clarifying the decision-making process of putting together the draft budget. The filming of the meeting and its rebroadcast by local TV in the evenings, which was likely to reach more citizens than could attend, no doubt encouraged opposition demands for greater transparency and accountability.

A meeting I observed in October 2009 between municipal officials in the Central Bosnian municipality of Kamen and nine marginalized local community leaders provided a window into the decision-making of another aspect of local governance. One part of an international organization's program for local governance sought to help strengthen municipal authorities' connection with their local communities (MZs), particularly marginalized ones.⁴⁷ Often, but not always, marginalized local communities were ones where "minorities" lived in the municipality; this was the case in Kamen, where 32 percent of the population belonged to those not of the primary ethno-national group. IO field staff had organized the meeting so that MZ leaders could present to municipal officials priority projects needing capital investment. As an apparent indication of his lack of prioritization of these marginalized local communities, Kamen's mayor that very morning backed out of the afternoon meeting, claiming another commitment with an international donor in Sarajevo. Yet, several heads of municipal departments, caucus presidents, and the municipal council secretary did attend.

Before the meeting even started, an MZ leader sitting near me expressed skepticism about its outcome. He volunteered, "nothing ever comes out of these meetings with the municipal authorities." Some MZ leaders confided they attended in order to support the idea of the need for the municipality to strengthen a bottom-up approach in addressing local communities' problems. One leader said he came

for the socializing, probably in the hopes of building useful connections. The community leader set this modest goal since the mayor had already told them that there was no money for investing in the projects that the local community leaders would present to his staff that day. In addition, the MZ leaders distrusted the municipality's selection process for capital investment projects. When one MZ leader asked the municipal head of the capital investment commission to explain how projects were selected for investment, he received assurances that the municipal commission had a systematic way of evaluating applications. The international official who facilitated the meeting confirmed to me the systematic nature of the mayor's commission of experts' selection process. He also added that the ultimate decisions were made in the municipal assembly, where he described the decision-making process as political.

Who is to blame for the tenuous links between minority local communities (MZs) and municipal authorities? For their part, the municipal authorities assert that they simply do not have enough resources to take on many of the projects proposed by local communities, marginalized or not. The head of the municipal commission for capital investment asserted that his administration lacked funding to keep up 90 percent of the rural roads in the municipality. A leading official in the canton's ruling party claimed that MZs rarely take the initiative to talk with municipal officials and that few MZ citizens take action. In response, MZ officials blamed lackluster citizen participation on their attempts to deal with the tough capitalist system and the resulting lack of financial resources and time. Others asserted that many MZ officials not belonging to the party of the mayor simply stopped trying to obtain investment because they felt that municipal officials and administrators were not willing to listen or act. Interviews and observation of meetings suggest that the mayors and their administrations bear much of the responsibility for the often contentious relations with marginalized MZ authorities and their citizens. An MZ leader ended the meeting by appealing to municipal staffers to urge their mayor himself to call the next meeting with MZ leaders. In doing so, the MZ leader asserted his agency, somewhat similar to the marginalized women in the films analyzed by Yana Hashamova in this volume. The appeal and side conversations suggest that the opportunity for municipal administrators to hear the MZ proposals would not have occurred without international

involvement. This is another indication of the long road that Bosnians still need to travel for local governance to effectively address the needs of citizens, regardless of their identity.

The Often Overlooked Obstacle of Politicization

Ethno-national affiliation, however, was not the only status that sometimes elicited inequitable treatment by local authorities. In fact, a chief grievance that citizens levied at their local governments was its politicization of decision-making and administration hiring over and above any manipulation for the benefit of one ethno-national group or another. Of those respondents in our representative sample survey who felt that local governance reforms had disproportionately benefited one group or another, more respondents believed that those tied to the local ruling party (13.1 percent) reaped unfair benefits, compared to those who believed that either the municipality's majority (8.9 percent) or minority (6.6 percent) received inequitable benefits. Respondents belonging to non-dominant groups were only slightly more likely to believe that persons belonging to the majority group disproportionately benefited from local governance reforms (15.7 percent) than those who belonged to the winning political party (14.9 percent).

These concerns with politicization challenge ethno-nationalists' assertion that they govern in the interests of all those belonging to a particular ethno-national group. They were detailed by a number of those we interviewed on the street in the case study municipalities. Eighty-nine percent of citizens interviewed in Planina and 81 percent of citizens interviewed in Brdo said they lacked the power to genuinely influence local government decision-making. This pessimistic view was reflected in low levels of participation in public meetings. Though both municipalities adhered to holding legally mandated public presentations of the draft budget for citizen input, only four citizens interviewed in Planina had attended one, while none in Brdo had.

The majority of citizens interviewed in Planina felt that questions raised during public meetings were dragged out meeting after meeting without being settled in a transparent manner. Instead, 82 percent believed such problems were "resolved" by politicians or those with political connections. Thus, "those not in a political party or not having

exceptionally good relations with the ruling party can only with difficulty get a problem resolved or have any kind of influence over decision-making.” Citizens appear convinced that if they lack the correct political ties, they cannot impact local government policy.

Citizens in Brdo also challenged their leadership’s professed commitment to professionalization, complaining that personal ties rather than merit determined the selection of municipal administrative staff. Seven citizens in Brdo were dissatisfied with their mayor’s leadership because of their belief that persons occupying significant positions in the administration lacked the needed qualifications but were employed because they were relatives, friends, or members of his political party. One-third of Brdo citizens who approached an unknown municipal administrator in order to address a local problem complained that they were shuffled from office to office without ever seeing someone who solved the issue.

One participant in a UNDP focus group gave an example.⁴⁸ She related that when a relative graduated from college and could not find a job, he heeded advice that he join the governing political party. Soon afterward, he was appointed the head of a municipal department. Bosnians tend to believe that unless one belongs to the governing political party, it is not useful to participate politically, even at the local level. Frustration with politicization of decision-making undermines citizens’ opportunities to participate in local governance decision-making and hold local governments accountable.

Polarization Trickles Down to Damage Local Governance

Given the continuing influence of patronage and the power invested in middle layers of government, it is not surprising that the political environment for local governance has deteriorated along with the polarization of national and entity-level politics between 2008 and today. During the 2008 mayoral election campaigns, the RS prime minister launched a fairly successful effort to unseat opposition party mayors by withholding investment in those municipalities.⁴⁹ These dynamics suggest that ethno-national ideology is pushed from above, as İpek K. Yosmaoğlu suggests in her chapter in this volume. International efforts to encourage constitutional reform to develop a more

functional national level of government needed to fulfill EU requirements for accession have led to a firestorm of threats from ethno-nationalist parties.

Furthermore, it took parties that won the October 2010 parliamentary elections fifteen months to form a national government. The SDP's formation of a government at the Federation level with parties other than the most popular ones among Croats—the HDZ and HDZ-1990—and with procedures of questionable legality encouraged the HDZ parties to allege systematic discrimination against Croats. The president of HDZ-1990 announced that he joined with HDZ and several minor Croat parties in April 2011 to form the Croatian National Assembly with an intermunicipal governing body in areas in the Federation which have a Croat majority “in response to the prevention of legitimate, genuine [*pravi*] Croat representatives from participating in the Federation government.”⁵⁰ Contention within the Croat community over “legitimate” political representation echoes what Brenna Miller describes in this volume as the debate over ways to make and reinforce a nation. At the same time as this dispute, many observers viewed national-level SDP politicians, in spite of their non-nationalist rhetoric, to have pursued policies and made personnel appointments during 2011 that privileged narrow partisan interests above good governance.⁵¹ All these efforts mean that local governance, despite the modest power it exercises, is hardly isolated from powerful ethno-national and political interests rooted in higher levels. Anger toward political capture and corruption in local decision-making, particularly at the cantonal and federal levels of governments, fueled grassroots protests and the formation of plenums in multiple towns in winter 2014.

Closing Thoughts:

The Local Level as the Least Worst for Citizens?

Human rights activists in Bosnia have long charged that the prominence of power sharing in the strongest political institutions in post-war Bosnia allows little room for the empowerment of citizens' rights. This chapter examined whether less powerful political institutions, those at the municipal level that lack rigid power-sharing arrangements, could encourage policies that improve the lives of all citizens, including those

who do not belong to the dominant ethno-national group or governing party in the municipality.

Indicators of government performance suggest that in comparison with national- and entity-level governance, local governance is more inclusive and functional. Except for the most contentious municipality—deeply divided Mostar, which has special electoral rules and an imposed municipal statute⁵²—local governments regularly present draft budgets to citizens and pass budgets more or less on time. And while citizens in Bosnia generally express low levels of trust in and satisfaction with their political authorities, they express higher levels of trust in and satisfaction with political authorities at the local level than those at higher levels of government.⁵³ When citizens take the rare action of contacting political officials they are most likely to do so at the local level.⁵⁴

Nonetheless, field research finds that internationally supported reforms have encouraged only small steps forward in creating local governments with the capacity and political will to address issues of concern to citizens other than those belonging to the dominant ethno-national group or political party. Reformers have been most successful in supporting the development of citizen services centers that effectively and equitably deliver official documents. They have been less successful in encouraging the effective delivery of basic services such as waste disposal or local economic development. It is in the competence of providing opportunities for meaningful participation in local government decision-making that local governance reforms in Bosnia have most pointedly failed to convince citizens, particularly those belonging to non-dominant ethno-national or political groups, that they can make a difference. Bosnia is far from alone among those diverse democratizing states struggling to offer citizens strong local participatory mechanisms.⁵⁵ It is a mistake, however, to blame *only* ethno-national ties for undermining effective local governance. Politicization of local decision-making appears to be almost as significant an obstacle to high quality local governance and responsiveness to locally defined interests as ethno-national divisions. This is a problem that reforms need to more effectively address. Such an approach will require a multipronged strategy to empower ordinary citizens and practical local leaders, as well as to create stronger mechanisms for accountability of elected local leaders and administrators.

NOTES

- 1 The author thanks domestic officials, citizens, international donors and implementers, and civic activists in Bosnia who took the time to help her learn about local governance. She is indebted to Zeljka Poloni, Mark Baskin, and Prism for collecting data and advice. Anushree Banerjee, Connor Smith, Oleg Firsin, and Eric Robinson helped analyze these data, while participants at the conference “Beyond Mosque, Church and State” at the Ohio State University in October 2011 contributed to this chapter. IREX, NCEEER, and a Weingartner Professorship provided financial support.
- 2 Florian Bieber, “The Challenge of Institutionalizing Ethnicity in the Western Balkans.” *European Yearbook of Minority Issue* 3 (2003/2004), 89–106.
- 3 Robert Hayden, *Blueprints for a House Divided* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).
- 4 USAID, *Decentralization and Democratic Local Governance Programming Handbook* (Washington, DC: Center for Democracy and Governance, 2000); Simon P. J. Batterbury and Jude L. Fernando, “Rescaling Governance and the Impacts of Political and Environmental Decentralization: An Introduction.” *World Development* 34.11 (2006), 1851–1863.
- 5 Merilee S. Grindle, *Going Local: Decentralization, Democratization and the Promise of Good Governance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 7; Andrew Konitzer, *Voting for Russia’s Governors: Regional Elections and Accountability under Yeltsin and Putin* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).
- 6 UN Institute for Training and Research, *Process of Decentralization in Asia, Africa, and Latin America: Decentralized Cooperation Programme Team* (2006).
- 7 I use the term “ethno-national group” to describe the Bosniak, Serb, and Croat groups that comprise the most significant percentage of the country’s population and have struggled over defining the state. While the term used to describe Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats in the local language is “nation” (*nacija*), I add the prefix “ethno” to distinguish the culturally claimed bases for these groups from the state citizenship basis of the term “Bosnian.” The meanings that individuals give to these group identities are socially constructed.
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- 32 I have changed the names of the municipalities to protect the anonymity of those I interviewed. For more in-depth analysis of how international aid affected local governance in these municipalities, see Paula M. Pickering, "Explaining the Varying Impact of International Aid for Local Democratic Governance in Bosnia-Herzegovina." *Problems of Post-Communism* 59.1 (2012), 30–43.
- 33 Federalni zavod za statistiku srednjobosanski Kanton u brojkama 2004 [Middle Bosnian Canton in Figures 2004], Sarajevo: Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine, 2004.

- 34 I identified thirty interviewees involved in local governance reform in Bosnia through official government information, program evaluations, domestic academic advisors, and through snowballing—suggestions from early interviewees. While these interviewees are not drawn from representative sample of actors involved in local governance, they are knowledgeable about local governance reforms, worked with a wide variety of organizations involved in local governance, and were suggested by gatekeepers with diverging views of local governance reforms. In order to protect their anonymity, I use a code to refer to interviewees and refrain from identifying their particular organization or institution of employment.
- 35 My colleague, Zeljka Poloni, conducted person-on-the-street interviews in the two case study municipalities. Over two days in early 2010, she stood in the central squares of these municipalities' centers and asked passers-by if they would be willing to participate in a short, anonymous survey about local governance reform. She interviewed twenty-seven persons in Planina and twenty-six in Brdo. Six persons refused to participate in Planina and five refused to participate in Brdo. The interviewees possessed varied educational, work, and ethno-national backgrounds. Eleven persons in Planina and ten persons in Brdo were of minority background.
- 36 While I endeavored to ask stakeholders common questions about local governance, particularly their view of the obstacles to improved local governance and about citizen participation in the municipality, I varied some questions to respond to the evolving discussion and to allow each stakeholder to elaborate on the particular role in local governance reforms that he or she played.
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- 41 Thirty percent of Planina respondents in our nationally representative survey indicated that their first concern for municipal government reforms was to "improve interethnic relations." However, 60 percent indicated that job creation was of a higher priority.

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- 42 Interview with the author, Central Bosnia, 2009.
- 43 Cynthia Nixon, *The Ties That Bind: Social Capital in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Sarajevo: UN Development Programme Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2009), 118.
- 44 Croat extremists initiated violence against Bosniaks in this municipality and others in Central Bosnia during 1993.
- 45 That ideology colors perspectives is reinforced by the leader of a prominent Bosnian Croat cultural association, Napredak. When I asked whether reforms to strengthen municipal governance had improved the lives of all citizens, Dr. Topic answered, "Without a doubt! I don't believe that ethno-national belonging is experienced strongly in local governance." This is consistent with his advocacy for a Bosnia that represents all citizens while respecting those of Croat background.
- 46 World Bank, "Local Governance," 99.
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- 48 Nixon, *The Ties That Bind*, 70.
- 49 Interview with the author, Sarajevo, 2009.
- 50 Eldin Hadzović, "Bosnian Croats Form National Assembly." *Balkan Insight*, 19 April 2011, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnian-croats-to-form-the-national-assembly>.
- 51 Interview with the author, Sarajevo, 2012.
- 52 See Sumantra Bose, *Bosnia after Dayton: Nationalist Partition and International Intervention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
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- 54 Nixon, *The Ties That Bind*.
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List of Contributors

NIKOLAY ANTOV is assistant professor of history at University of Arkansas.

DONNA A. BUCHANAN is associate professor of musicology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

THEODORA DRAGOSTINOVA is associate professor of history at The Ohio State University.

VICTOR A. FRIEDMAN is Andrew W. Mellon Distinguished Service Professor in the Humanities and full professor of linguistics at the University of Chicago.

IRINA GIGOVA is associate professor of history at the College of Charleston.

EDIN HAJDARPASIC is assistant professor of history at Loyola University, Chicago.

YANA HASHAMOVA is full professor of Slavic and Chair of the Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures.

BRENNAN MILLER is a PhD candidate in history at The Ohio State University.

PAULA M. PICKERING is associate professor of government at the College of William and Mary.

MARIA POPOVA is associate professor of political science at McGill University.

İPEK K. YOSMAOĞLU is associate professor of history at Northwestern University.

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